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An Old - Fashioned Garden



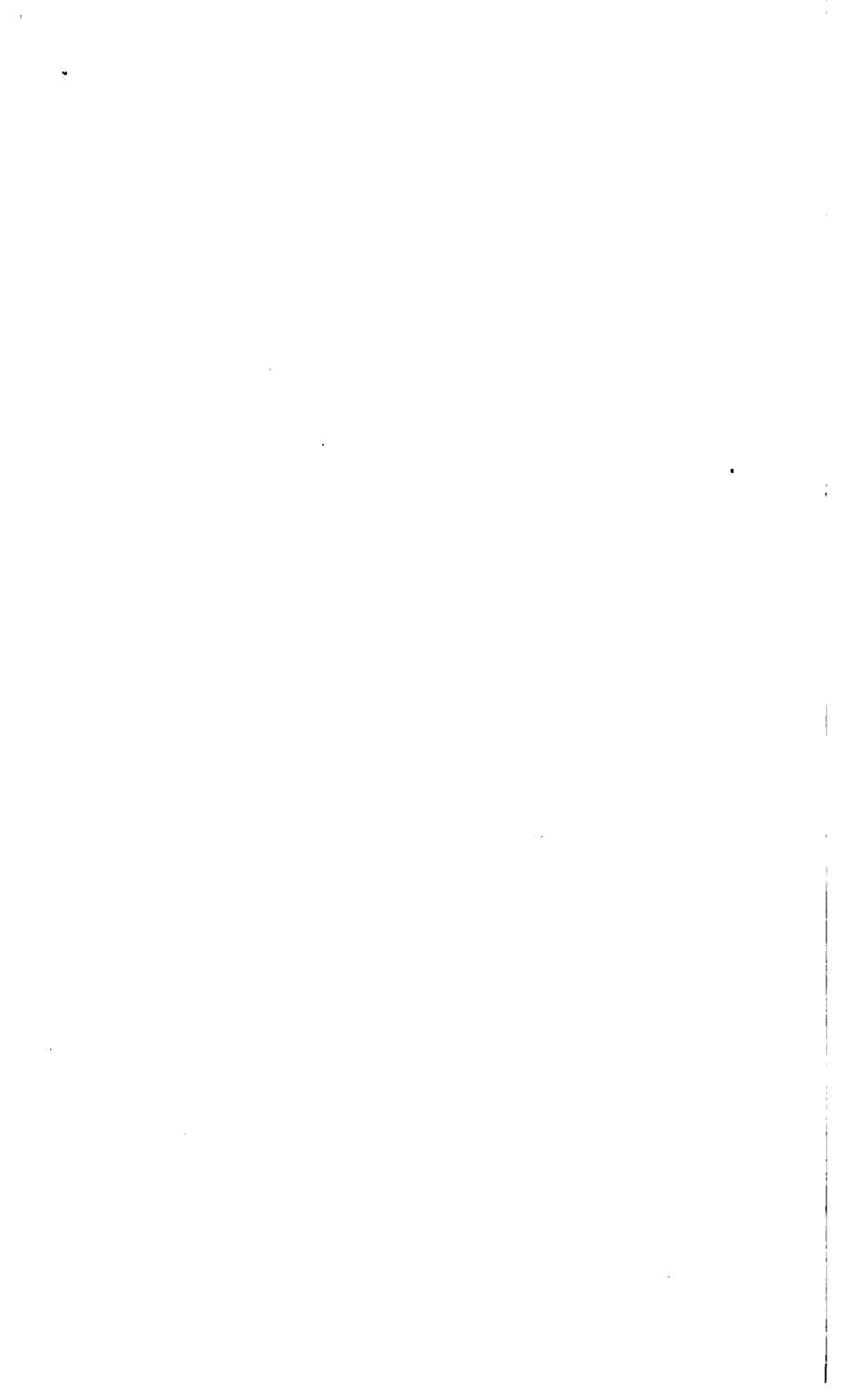
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An Old-fashioned Garden,

And Walks and Musings
Therein.

I write of Flowers

"Which, when the hand that plucked them drops and dies,
Still keep their radiant beauty free from stain
And breathe their fragrance through the centuries.



Written and Illustrated by

Lydia L. A. Very,

Author of "A Strange Disclosure,"

"The Organ Grinder's Daughter,"

"Sayings and Doings Among Insects and Flowers,"

"A Strange Recluse."

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I dedicate this volume
to the Beloved Memory of my Mother,
and those who have walked with me in our
Old-fashioned Garden.

E. E. A. V.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF AN OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN.



HIS old-fashioned garden, when the Muser first knew it, was a neglected, degraded garden or, rather, no garden at all. The former occupant of the place was a tanner and currier; in order to make the house warmer winters, he had heaped banks of leather shavings across the back of it, emblematic of his trade. The first efforts in gardening were to remove these unsightly objects. No excavator in Pompeii ever worked with greater ardor than we. The land was broad and level back of the house, the nextended down in two slopes to a beautiful, broad river, level places between each slope.

It was covered with grass, had several thrifty young apple trees, a row of large locust trees at the foot of the garden, and one very large one higher up, said, and proved to be, two hundred years old; the old gentleman

who lived near us, at the age of ninety years, having known it from boyhood, and whose father, living to the same age, had also remembered it from childhood. The Muser has known it for nearly three-quarters of a century and has named it Daniel Webster, "for it still lives." The broad, beautiful river that ran by the foot of the garden,—how shall I describe it? Salt were its waters. The breezes swept wholesome, refreshing airs around the place. White-capped its waves in Spring and Fall when cold, rushing winds sported with them. Clear, pure, translucent, its water; in calm, mild weather you could see the golden sands at the bottom and its happy denizens sporting to and fro. What a pleasure it was to watch them! The scarlet Samphire grew near the edge; cockles and shells were left by the kindly tide when it drove back the waves to their father, the Ocean, twice a day, but, going, it left us the shells to gather and play with. Removing from a house with very little land, this garden to us children seemed heavenly.

The house was old-fashioned — but what of that! The young apple trees wore in spring

robes of green trimmed with rosy blossoms that sent down a very beauty shower on the awaking earth. White clouds of locust blooms hung overhead, sending forth a delicious fragrance. The grass put up its fingers everywhere, as if to catch us in our frolics. After every school session

"Joyfully dear was the homeward track,
Where we were so sure of a welcome back."

The first thing the mother cared for was to plant flowers: roses, peonies, larkspur, pinks, lilacs, garden lilies, low marigolds, lad's-love, and many more we olden-time folk remember.

On Sundays, little bunches of spearmint, rose geranium, lad's-love and cupid's delights were given us to carry to meeting. The roses! how beautiful they were! Some one has said "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet!" But, re-christened by modern gardeners as Duke of this, General that, Belle something, Lady something, they smell no sweeter, with far less fragrance indeed, than they did called by their humble cognomens,

as blush rose, tea rose, cluster rose, wild rose, sweet-brier rose; this last — how the fragrance comes to us as we name it. The poet Brainard called it "the little rose that I love best." What other rose (I recall none) has fragrant green leaves like this?

And the wild rose, that gives its beauty to the roadside and mixes with the lowly bushes, how it offers its wealth of pink loveliness to the children on their way to school! and says "pick a bunch, we are free to all, and carry us to your teacher." We have heard of a teacher that, when the little children brought their flower offerings, took them and threw them into the waste basket. Another teacher we could name put them (even the little weeds, grass and clovers) in a vase of water on her table, telling the givers how pretty they were, and thanking them. I need not say, how these little ones, in after years, spoke of this with pleasure.

CHAPTER II.

RED PEONIES.



OME one has written "vulgar, red peonies!" Can anything that God made be vulgar? I trow not. I doubt me, if any of the modern varieties of flowers, be they ever so beautiful, ever gave one-half the pleasure that one of these despised red ones gave to a little girl years ago. She sat in meeting, weary with hearing, but not understanding, one of those long-winded sermons, with its firstly, secondly, thirdly, fourthly never-ending divisions. She sat behind an old deacon and perhaps (although the account did not say so) was beating a tattoo against his seat, impelled by an uncontrollable desire to move and be doing something. The old deacon turned round, reached over, and gave her a large red peony. How the little face brightened up! how the tattoo ceased! how eagerly the little fingers clutched it, examined it, counted the petals,

poked at the stamens and pistil! Was ever anything so charming! All weariness died away, for the peony was a dream of delight.¹

Surely, if the angels looked in at the tops of the ancient windows, let down for air, and if they were recording angels, and had brought their books, they must have put down more credit marks to the kind old deacon than they ever did at the end of his long prayers in vestry meetings.

Cupid's-delights, which we small ones used to call Cubiddelights, named by some ladies'-delights, were the ancestors of all the pansies of the present day. How closely they clung to mother earth, as if loath to leave her. How they smiled to the little hands that picked them and carried them to church. And when there, how many simple sermons they preached to little brains that else had been torpid in sleep.

Lad's-love! how many a rustic maiden,

¹ The name of the writer of this incident (which was probably her own experience and which in after life she commemorated in a poem), whose name I have forgotten, said, that of all the joys of after life, and all the fair things she had seen, none gave her more pleasure, or looked more beautiful than that resplendent peony.

blushing as she gathered it, thought of the one dearest to her heart.


The mother was passionately fond of flowers. They were her solace and delight in her cares and her sorrows. When about her work she still had time to go into the garden and pluck a poppy flower, to turn the petals back, tie them with a bit of grass, leaving the round, green seed vessel to make a doll's head while the petals formed the dress, for the little invalid who reclined on her elbows and knees on the carpet (for two years) till they were calloused. What pleasure this amusement gave her and also a few morning glories that peeped in at the window.

Years before the Muser's recollection, there was a little blind brother born. He had beautiful blue eyes and golden hair. His blindness was unperceived for a year. The mother kept a box of flowering plants at the back door; and it was one of the pleasures of the little blind one, as soon as he was able to walk, to toddle out and smell the blossoms. One day he came in crying and saying "Mother, your flowers have bit me!" The

poor child held out his hand firmly shut; when opened, therein was a crushed bee! Never after could he be persuaded to go near the flowers. His short, but happy life, ended at four years. Just before passing away to that land where the flowers have no stings, he said "What is that music, mother? I hear beautiful music!" So passed his innocent soul, welcomed by harmonies of the celestial world.

CHAPTER III.

A WALK UP SALEM TURNPIKE.

LOWERS that the Muser's sister loved were the lavender and white and purple clematis, and the graceful harebell; the latter said to derive its name from growing in places frequented by hares. But some think it was called hair bell because of the fineness of its flower stalks.

Be this as it may, none dispute its grace and beauty, with its delicate blue bells, and its grass-like leaves, resembling in masses the waves of the sea.

The Muser's ambition was to have a rockery at the foot of the great locust tree. The undertaking required great energy and hard work; but youth and strength falter at no obstacles; so she toiled up the hill with great rocks till quite a heap was collected. After a profound meditation and much hard labor a high mound of stones, bricks and soil was accomplished. As she worked and mused

Dame Nature called to her "Love me and follow my teachings. If you love me you will not do as those do who distort what I make beautiful by their ribbon beds, their carpet patterns and so forth, flowers not allowed to grow, but, shaven into images of flags, shields, and generals' faces, that are admired by those who have no love for me, else they would not fancy these mutilations — my beautiful trees docked of their spreading limbs and sometimes, even, of their sky-seeking tops. Now, place your rocks here and there carelessly, avoid regularity. Put them as I put them in the waste places, carelessly, not studied." The Muser followed instructions and Dame Nature looked pleased; then more soil was put between the rocks.

Then with her friend M. she began her journeys up the turnpike. Will the reader accompany us in search of wild flowers, ferns and mosses? How sunny and bright the morning! With baskets and trowels we walk gaily on, and though we are grateful for our homes, we feel "there is no home like God's out-of-doors."

There are the Sliding Rock and the King's Arm Chair! of both of which the elder brother has written. The Sliding Rock is worn smooth by the feet of many little children, the Arm Chair occupied how often by little ones with pride.

We go up by the little brook that has been running and singing for centuries, with its fringe of wild roses hiding their blushes in its stream; on it goes, ripple, ripple, ripple, singing the same old song, ever new to the ear of those who will listen.

Look at that large barn! We have had many good times there "when our feet slipped up on the seedy floor and we cared not for the fall."

Here we loved to feed the patient cows, looking at us with their beautiful, brown eyes. Here we swung in the big swing fastened to the high ridge-pole overhead, long, delightful rushings through the hay-scented air. How we envied the boys who would hoist the swing up on the hay loft, and going up, swing off up to the roof. But our courage was not equal to the feat.

One acrobatic feat we did perform ; walking across on a lofty beam from one hay loft to another, stopping in the middle of it, realizing the danger, and warning our comrade not to follow. How I breathe the hay-scented air now, as I write !

But we will go on farther to Columbine Hill. How many remembrances are associated, O Columbine, with thy crimson petals, nodding a welcome to each little comer ! Firmly rooted ye were to the rocks defying the strong winds ! Well we know that, as we and our friend M. dig and tug at them. Poor flower ! taken away from thy native habitat to grace a rockery ! But then, if you only consent kindly to grow, how much pleasure will you give the Muser and her friends, *Aquilegia Canadensis* ! No, columbine ! we prefer that name.

Here is the *Saxifraga Virginiensis* from *saxum*, a rock and *frango*, to break ; or, as the Germans call it, Steinbrech, as it grows in clefts of the rock, and was supposed to break the rocks asunder, a mighty feat for so little a flower. M. and you and I, reader, knew it in our childhood as mayflower. It cannot

boast of much beauty ! not as much as the *Mayanthemum*, the Canadian mayflower, or the hawthorn, the mayflower of England, or more beautiful than all, the trailing arbutus of Plymouth.

But all are beautiful to childhood's eyes and all are welcomed as the harbingers of spring.

Look at the *Houstonia cærulea*, or, as some call it, Quaker ladies, some, bluets ! But we prefer the name country people give it, of *innocence*, looking up with its lovely little stars. We love it also, because it grows in families.

See the first blue violets hiding in the grass, time out of mind the emblem of modesty ! I cannot refrain from copying here, a little poem on the violet which, as some one writes, is as delicate as the flower it celebrates.

A VIOLET.

"God does not send us strange flowers every year.
When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces.

The violet is here.

It all comes back : the odor, grace and hue ;
Each sweet relation of its life repeated :
No blank is left, no looking-for is cheated ;
It is the thing we knew.

So after death — winter, it must be.

God will not put strange sights in heavenly places.

The old love will look out from the old faces.

Vellchen! I shall have thee!"


Now reader and friend M., we must have some ferns; for what is a rockery without them?

Here is the woodsia that only asks a little soil among the rocky ledges to grow; it is only about four inches high, but will fit in nicely in odd places. There is the polypody, an evergreen, that hangs its green mantle on the huge rocks as if pitying their nakedness, and keeps verdant all winter. The lady fern is more delicate but more beautiful. Now M., as our baskets are filled, we will take the homeward track; where we arrive, tired but pleased with our excursion; our baskets full of our trophies, our memories loaded, like well-filled kodaks, with pleasant pictures ready to come out when wanted.

Memory! Thou book of remembrance, could we charge thee, to retain only the pleasantest and the most cheering pictures and impressions we see and have, how delightful would the retrospect be!

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROCKERY AND ENCROACHMENT OF PLANTS.

OW for the planting of the rockery. Some of our wild plants take kindly to their new places. Some, like homesick souls afflicted with nostalgia, pine after the homes they have left and, drooping and shrivelling, in spite of the kindly care given them, die, sending up their fragrant breath like a sigh for their native hills.

The woodsia is tough and strong and will survive, but the lady fern refuses to be comforted although her old mate, the columbine, is near her.

Ah, well! the Muser has persistence of character, and will continue in her labor of love, calling upon mother Nature to kindly assist her.

We heard E. P. Whipple lecture once on persistence of character; and one of the

incidents he related, confirming it. was this : "The husband of a lady (residents of Europe) came to this country, leaving his wife no address, where he might be found.

She followed him, not long after, a stranger in a strange land, ignorant of its language, ignorant of where to seek him. She went through the streets of one of our great cities, I think it was Boston, calling out his name. 'Gilbert! Gilbert! Gilbert!' she cried, until some one aroused by it and pitying her, found him for her."

So, if Dame Nature ever hides away from the Muser, she will pursue the same plan.

How true it is that some plants, like some individuals, are guilty of encroachment.

When people of compassionate natures and kind feelings have taken the latter into their homes, when these individuals get firmly established there, they monopolize all the belongings around them; and, when told they had better go, seem to feel themselves insulted, and say, or act, as if their right was as good as the owner's.

Even so with some plants. The Muser had a



BOFFIN'S BOWER.

root of moneywort given her. What pleasure was given with it. Every care was taken of it. How beautiful looked its little yellow flowers, and its leaves, which next to that of the pyrola come nearest to being round. It grew, it flourished, and then—it began to spread; not content with the place assigned it, it crossed the path and settled itself in the borders to the detriment of the other flowers. This not being seen at first, the ounce of prevention neglected, it travelled into the grass.

Then the Muser made war upon it, but, as soon as it was uprooted in one place, it made for another (with almost human sagacity), till it covered the whole of one slope. A friend said, "The grass will kill it." But it was not to be killed. The war of extermination has been going on for years and still it defies all efforts to eradicate it. It runs along like a happy child, drinking in the golden sunshine, establishing its little patches of green and looking up with its bright flowers as if it said "I have as much right to be here as you!"

Then another plant, herb Robert, brought

from the fields and admired for its pink blossoms and graceful leaves, this took example from the moneywort and did likewise. But there was one fortunate thing about it; it was not as firmly rooted as the former, growing spider-like, half roots above ground; so its extinction (although it had covered one slope) was comparatively easy.

A botanist wrote once "that this plant had a stinking odor."

What right had he so to call it? the scent might not be pleasant to him; but that scent was given to it by its Maker for some wise purpose. Perhaps to attract insects who might, otherwise, pass its modest bloom without fertilizing it. Then the odors disliked by one person are often enjoyed by another.

The fragrance of the Chinese lilies is disagreeable and sickening to the Muser; while others to whom she has sent them at New Year (when given to herself), have told her how delightful it was and how it scented the rooms. The autumn phlox is another plant that delights in spreading; a thrifty, healthy grower. Not having the heart to eradicate it,

the Muser only tried to keep it in bounds. Its fragrance is sweet and delicious. The slope of one hill covered with its pink and white blooms makes a charming picture in the Fall of the year.

CHAPTER V.

TOADS — AND GARDEN EXERCISE.



THE muser has always exerted herself in defence of dumb animals; no creature is so small that it is uncared for, unnoticed by the Maker.

Why should man, the guardian of the lower animals (we say lower animals, when they often possess and exhibit higher qualities than he!), ill treat or abuse them?

Among the countless creatures that have been placed in our care are the toads. They have been considered ugly. Even school girls take the poor toad as a term of reproach and spite, saying "you mean toad! you ugly toad!" To be sure they have no voice for singing, they are not large enough to do man's drudgery and therefore they were thought to be fit subjects for abuse.

Foolish superstitions prevailed against them.

The Muser saw a small boy rocking one

and remonstrated; when the little fellow said, "My mother says they get poison out of the ground." She stood long enough, after trying to teach the little boy a better lesson, to see the poor thing escape under the door-steps. Foolish, ignorant mother! ignorant, cruel child!

Time, the adjuster of all evils, has changed public opinion in regard to toads. They are now considered valuable. In England, Germany and other places, they are bought by gardeners as useful helpers in destroying bugs and insects.

Why should we call the toad ugly? it has been allowed that its eyes are handsome. Could we but remember that its brown, mottled, lumpy skin, resembling the places it frequents, was given it for its protection, we should not only admire the wisdom that planned it, but see how admirably it matches old stumps, bark of trees, heaps of *débris*, and stones where it runs to hide.

Opposite the Muser's home was a cellar window a little below the ground. Seeing boys and girls often bending down and look-

ing for something, she went across the road to investigate.

They were after the poor toads who had sought shelter there, it being damp and cool in hot weather. She took the toads and made a bargain with the children to bring her all the toads they found, for a cent a piece. She was pleased with results.

One day, a little while after this, when she had forgotten the incident and had received as many toads as she wanted, a little girl knocked at the end door. The Muser wondered what she wanted, and inquired her errand and was answered, toads! the little girl had brought some carefully in a small box.

How often has the Muser when wandering round the garden, meditating on the wonders of created things, watched toads and studied their ways, dropping, sometimes, bits of raw meat, to see them seize it greedily.

Once, seeing one of these little animals seated on an old stump, she approached, cautiously, with a ripe raspberry on the end of a straw and presented it; the toad thrust

out its long tongue with eagerness for the *bonne bouche*, but instinct told him a stranger was near and he fled. Poor little thing! useful, how useful to man and how often persecuted and tormented! its only means of defence being to eject a watery fluid on its enemy.

How often as a child, as I took them up to examine and caress them, have I dropped them suddenly from fear of this harmless fluid. Why is it that some parents teach their children, by word and example, to be afraid of these smaller creatures, or to use them as playthings, regardless of inflicting pain, when they might instruct them in tender lessons of humanity and God's goodness and wonderful workmanship?

I copy an interesting fact about toads.

"Mr. Brunet says in "La Nature" that going one day into his garden, just before a storm, he found the bees crowding into their hives. About fifty centimetres from the best hive, there was a medium-sized toad which every now and then rose on his fore legs and made a dart with surprising quickness towards

blades of grass. He was found to be devouring bees, which rested on the grass blades, awaiting their chance to enter the hive. Mr. Brunet watched until twelve victims had been devoured. He expected the toad's voracity would be rewarded with a sting, but in vain; objecting to further destruction, he seized the toad by one of his legs and carried him to a bed of cabbages thirty metres off, where he might do real service among the caterpillars, etc. Three days after this, on going out to the hives, he saw the same toad, which was easily discoverable, at its old work. M. Brunet let him swallow only three or four bees, then carried him fifty metres in another direction. A week after he was again found greedily devouring them." Probably the toad, tired of eating snails, bugs, etc., wanted a *bonne bouche* that the honeyed legs of the bees furnished.

* * * * *


To turn from this interesting little creature to the healthy exercise obtained by gardening. An old writer says "in what you sweat indulge your taste." Is he not right?

How far preferable to be exercising all your muscles in a garden where all the senses are appealed to in turn : the eye, feasting, resting with pleasure and content on lovely flowers, blossoming trees, budding plants ; the sense of smell inhaling their perfume ; the ear delighted with the songs of birds or the chirping of insects ; the mind freed from the petty cares and worries of life ; than to be vaulting over bars, swinging from a trapeze, climbing ladders or lifting heavy weights in a heated gymnasium. When you examine flowers with a microscope how many hidden beauties are brought to light ! and the imagination conceives and believes there are millions of minute plants, perfect, beautiful, beyond the limits of our vision ; that there are unnumbered harmonies beyond the power of our hearing ; uncounted perfumes our sense of smell cannot perceive or enjoy ; that every insect, every living creature, however small, but has a voice.

How many theories has the Muser indulged in while at work in this old-fashioned garden !

CHAPTER VI.

WEEDING.

HAT a prosaic thing is weeding ! so say many, and more think it, regarding it as a necessary evil, something that must be done ; a dull, dirty, disagreeable occupation ; something that belongs to Patrick or James, but beneath themselves.

They do not enjoy kneeling close to Mother Earth and learning her secrets. "Speak to the Earth and she shall teach thee." True now as of old. As we remove these spreading plants that are covering the walks, does it not seem like cruelty ?

Nature has taught them, when their families become large, to go forth like the emigrant and become a squatter on any unoccupied land. So these have entered the walks and have increased and multiplied ; they resent my trowel and garden knife with all their strength ; they feel that they have a right

there. Like the dwellers in Ireland they do not believe in ejectments. So these little plants, that have made themselves a home in my garden walks, hold on with all their finger-like roots and defy me; the grass with its sword-like blades even cuts my fingers.

Many of the plants are broken off and another year will come up bright as ever, perchance put forth their flowers to laugh in my face and mock my fruitless efforts.

Did not the old plants say to them before they spread, "Children, we are crowded here: go farther out and make yourselves a home. Drink in the dew and the rain, bathe in the sunshine, cling close to the earth, anchor deep to resist the wind, and grow."

In the borders we do not interfere with the relationship of flowers. We are willing that genealogies should be carried out to the sixth generation. For do they not hide the weeds?

So let them mat and form an arabesque pattern if they will. We will only stop them when they make warfare on their neighbors and seek to crowd them out of the borders. Once I could not bear to throw away a plant

I had weeded from the walk ; now want of time to set them somewhere else necessitates it.

With what a different spirit they take my attacks ! what is this delicate perfume around me ? it comes from the balm that lies bruised and broken, where I have thrown it. How it speaks of the spirit of forgiveness that makes man akin to the angels, and brings even now from the distant ages, the voice saying, " Father, forgive !"

It is towards the close of the day, and most of the insects have satisfied their hunger and gone to rest.

But what is this lying on the leaves ? The remains of a beautiful butterfly. Why should such a short, happy life be made shorter by furnishing food to another creature, or be lost by accident ? Beautiful floating flower ! there is one who mourns your untimely end. The wings are intact, so we carry it into the house.

We do not take pleasure in seeing beautiful winged creatures used for ornament when a pin is cruelly stuck through them or poison dropped on them. Far be it from me to shorten

the happy lives that seem to us too fleeting at the most; but they embrace, in their limited duration, all the happiness they are capable of enjoying.

We have collected a high heap of — shall we call them weeds? around us. Who can define their intrinsic value? In them there may be a balm for every pain that flesh is heir to. And the Muser's thoughts took shape —

We call them *weeds*, the while with slender fingers
Earth's wounds and scars they seek to cover o'er;
On sterile sands where scarce the raindrop lingers
They grow and blossom by the briny shore.

We call them *weeds*; did we their forms but study
We many a secret might enfolded find;
Each tiny plant fulfils its heaven-taught mission,
And bears the impress of immortal mind.

We call them *weeds*, the while their uses hidden
Might work a nation's weal, a nation's woe, —
Send through each wasted form the balm of healing,
And cause the blood with youth's quick pulse to flow.

Weeds — yet they hold in bounds the mighty ocean!
Their slender threads bind firm the sandy shore.
Navies may sink amid its wild commotion,
These humble toilers ne'er their work give o'er.

And who shall say the feeblest thought avails not
To bind the shifting sands upon Life's beach?
Some heart may treasure what we've long forgot —
The faintest word some soul with power may reach.

So thought the Muser as she walked among
these humble denizens of the garden.

This circle of moneywort, according to our
views of garden beauty, must be made even.
Nature's idea of beauty and ours conflict. It
is her desire to make it a spreading carpet of
green and gold; she weaves day and night,
with her noiseless, unseen fingers. We feel
that she is right; still, we remove and even
it. We say, by way of apology, it is beautiful,
but it must not take up all the space.
Moneywort! we do not like the word or the
thought of money applied to a flower or even
to a weed. Flowers afford us something that
money cannot buy; there never should have
been a traffic in flowers. Why were they
made?

“ God might have made the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak tree and the cedar tree,
Without a flower at all.”

In flowers we begin to appreciate the thought of God toward mankind.

What wealth of design is displayed, what unrivalled richness of coloring, what lavish, prodigal growth! and all for what? that we might love the tenderness that gave them. That we might have faith in the One who made them. That they might bring to our life, otherwise hard and prosaic, the imaginative beauty, the delicate foreshadowing of a brighter and better existence.

What would this earth be without the delicate fringe of blossoms that cluster round her bosom in spring, the gorgeous richness of flowers that fill her hands in summer, or the last rich brilliant trophies that deck her russet gown in autumn? Has she not taught even old winter to mimic the trailing sprays of wild-wood blooms, and hung the trees with icy buds and flowers?

But our weeding is finished. We look round with satisfaction on our work. And if from these few words of ours we have given any one a new thought, or woven a romance about a common thing, we shall be more than satisfied.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GARDEN IN SPRING.

“Now is the glorious resurrection time,
When all earth’s buried beauties have new birth.
Behold the yearly miracle complete —
God hath created a new heaven and earth.

There is no tree that wants its garment now;
No flower but hastes its bravery to don.
God calls thee to this marriage feast of joy,
Let thy soul put its wedding garment on.

Soar with the bird, and flutter with the leaf;
Dance with the seedy grass in fringy play;
Sail with the clond, wave with the dreaming pine;
And float with Nature all the livelong day.”



It is, indeed, a resurrection and, as Mrs. Stowe wrote, “All earth’s buried beauties have new birth.”

Who can doubt the miracles of the Bible when he sees the miracle of life from death, in spring?

See the tender grass lifting its tiny fingers towards heaven! Behold the brown, seemingly dead trees, like careful mothers, putting

forth their green buds, slowly, little by little, to accustom them to bear the rude winds and the cold !

The skies are growing bluer, the winds softer.

A delicate, golden radiance comes, here and there, from the Forsythia, or golden bells, or sunshine bush, the prettiest name of all. Soon the peach trees send a roseate flush as if blushing at their own loveliness. The cherry tree, arrayed like a bride, holds out its arms to be introduced to the first new comer at this "marriage feast of joy."

Beneath the grass the little violets are breathing forth a fragrant welcome.

Now the jocund farmer "drives his team afield." Then the seed is dropped into Mother Earth's lap, who says, with a smile on her brown face to all the sons of toil, "I will care for it for you. Trust me ! Have I ever failed to help you ? I will pay back your deposits in gold. Yes, gold ! when the yellow corn (a peaceful army) waves its shining green plumes in serried ranks, when the ripe

squashes and pumpkins turn their golden faces to the sun who helps me. I foresee man's wants. I provide fruit and vegetables for the present time, and hide in them seeds for the future. Nature helps me with sun and showers. The Maker of all things tells me what to do. He has taught me to provide for all the large family of mankind. But the greed of speculation makes countless millions starve.

"When weary of life's cares, its cruelties and strife, come to me! I am always ready to receive you. Whisper to me all your troubles; tell me all your grievances. Listen to my trees, as with rustling breath they strive to comfort you. Gaze on my flowers; they will smile upon you, and in their innocent loveliness prattle to you of innocence and peace.

"I am Mother Earth; all who rest on me are my children — even man. I provide bountifully for all. If the evil spirits that enter into his heart were but cast out, the feast I am continually spreading would suffice, aye, and millions of basketfuls be taken up and to spare." Earth is the mother of baby Spring.

The Baby Spring with sweetest breath
Clings round the Earth, her mother ;
Flings off the sheet of lingering snow
With which she seeks to cover,
And throws her flowers far and wide,
White, blue, and gold on every side.

Mother Earth dresses baby Spring in a blue dress of violets, or a yellow one of buttercups, or a white one of daisies. Bountiful Mother Earth ! it is a pleasure to draw near you and to take counsel.

Old Father Time tells the Muser of his children. One is a little maiden, he says, " who trips along, oh ! like the wind ; the birds follow her and she mocks their song. Her lap is always filled with flowers, and she brings them to me every day. Perhaps you think flowers are not becoming to an old man like me — but I love them, although I have to cut them down. But, as I was saying, the little maiden is always busy. She unlocks the rills and they go dancing through the meadows. The little lambs all know her and come bleating after her. She makes friends with all the farmers ; sometimes they call her late as she goes from one to the other ; but they are

always glad to welcome her. The grass looks greener when she is round, I tell you. She's my pet, but ah ! she has to go away when the next girl comes.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY TREES.

My trees are named for friends.
(This to my garden lends
An added charm.)
Those living and those fled
From earthly harm.

And walking round the aisles,
When Spring with Nature smiles,
I call each name —
And feel them by my side,
As though they came.

When strong winds wave the trees,
They bend them in the breeze,
And say " Good Day !"
Keeping *their mem'ries green*
Though far away.

So, present still, they rise,
Look forth with kindly eyes,
And give good cheer ;
While mem'ry brings each voice,
To bid my heart rejoice,
As they were here.



HE Muser has eighteen kinds of trees in the old-fashioned garden, viz., horse chestnut, elm, ash, buckthorn, locust, maple, apple, pear, quince, plum, peach, cherry, Norway spruce, native spruce, hemlock, white pine, fir-balsam, some of the pines being brought from the woods on excursions and some the gifts of friends.

A circular spot was formed between the hills by the Muser and called Ramoth Woods; here she has planted hemlocks and pines and, with her usual persistence of character, as soon as one dies, supplies the place with another. Beneath them she puts mossy stones, lichen-covered rocks, ferns, wild plants, etc., so that when she is older and cannot take wood excursions, she still may be able to creep out and enjoy them; bringing back the pleasant thoughts of other days.

High box borders the two square garden plots above the hills and, although grown old like the Muser, still preaches its signification of constancy.

Near Ramoth woods, between a cherry tree

and a pear tree, is a hammock, made of a very large, foreign basket, found among the treasures of the old barn. Sawed in two by the aid of a friend, ropes fastened to it and to the trees, it forms a resting place, even at noon of a summer day in this shady garden, for the Muser to meditate and dream.

Above wave the green boughs where the birds are enjoying their short lives; higher above float the white clouds in a sea of blue, bearing, perhaps, the thoughts, the longings, the prayers of many human hearts, who look upwards always in their troubles; on they float—may they reach the port of eternal rest.

Across the foot of the garden is a walk, bordered half way with violets, half way with the English plant, called the lesser celandine. Wordsworth wrote five sonnets upon it; he must have thought it beautiful and worthy of being commemorated. It is one of the earliest spring flowers; cheerful looking, golden, with shining, dark green leaves; it looks like a little sun. It is said that an English painter copied it for the sign of the Sun

Tavern. It looks up with its cheery face as if to say "Spring is here !" it lasts for about a month then vanishes, its strength going back to its little bulbs, to remain safely housed till another spring.

In spring the cherry tree, a mass of beautiful, white blossoms, stands forth in the sunshine, or illuminated by the electric lights, a thing of beauty ; valued more for its blossoms than for its fruit. What feasts it has furnished to the robins and other birds. The Muser welcomed them. But one summer she thought of reserving a few for herself and her friends. But how to do it? She remembered a device of a man to protect his grapes by placing an artificial cat on the trellis. So she made a cat of old black broadcloth, with forelegs and a tail, and buttons for eyes ; and, before putting it on the tree, she called in her three cats to test its naturalness.

First she showed the dummy, placed on a chair, to Posy ; he looked at it — and fled ! then she brought Dora Patterson (Posy's mother). She walked towards it, looked at it, hissed at it and ran away. Then But-

tercup, the most intelligent of the three, came in ; she walked up to it, looked at it steadily, then struck it with her paw ! finding no response, she went off satisfied. So the Muser, seeing that the dummy was sufficiently natural, put it on a bough in the lower part of the tree. It answered the purpose ; the birds kept away from the lower boughs. This is a better way of protecting fruit than that of a man in a neighboring town, who hired boys to shoot the robins while his old father went round with his cane punching out the bottom of their nests after their labor of making them in Spring. And for what was the cruelty ? for a few cherries, when, without the labor of the robins and other birds, his trees would have been eaten by insects.

How many have passed round your walks, Old Garden ! with the Muser for a guide, explaining the points of interest, the memories of bygone things, and holding pleasant communion. And none were more pleasant than that when the gentle poet C—B— walked with the Muser (after the death of the elder brother, his friend) when he asked permission to gather

some of the garden flowers, which no doubt, he pressed as mementos of his friend.

Seeds were wafted sometimes across the river. One, a wallflower, came up by the great locust tree and blossomed before it was discovered. The willow herb, with its delicate pink flowers, grew luxuriantly by the lower walk.

The elder brother erected a bower or summer house at one end of the walk. Not being skilful at carpentry, it was simple and plain, but convenient; convenient for him to sit and meditate and compose. Some of his friends named it Inspiration Point.

The Muser, not to be outdone, built a bower for herself at the distant end of the lower walk. She planted and trained a woodbine over it, made a slanting path to it from the main walk, bordered it with flowers—marigolds, zinnias, and morning glories round the posts of the open slat fence. Here was her retreat often; to gaze at the waves, to look at the trees and flowers, to watch the black ants, travelling, seemingly without method, up and down the woodbine; she knew their march

was not purposeless, only she couldn't divine its meaning. She thought of Sir John Lubbock, who studied these ants for twelve years, and wished he were there to tell her the reason.


She called her place Boffin's Bower. Once it was devastated by boys, who pulled the poles from the roof, to assist them in their favorite amusement of pottering on the ice.

Then another place of rest called Forget-me-not Bower was made half-way in the walk for the elder sister, where were planted the forget-me-nots she loved.

Sitting in Boffin's Bower, when Twilight arrayed in her gray robes walked round the garden, when the Muser watched the evening primroses opening to greet her, sending forth their peculiar scent, when the little moths who love it, flew to it, two of their wings looking like rose petals, two, light yellow as the flower, when stars came forth one by one, as if to view the peaceful scene and gaze far down in the depths of the quiet water, fresh, cool, not polluted (as it was in after days), it seemed to be a joy to breathe.

CHAPTER IX.

SUMMER TIME.

WEET summer time ! when warmer
airs enfold the old-fashioned garden ; when the sun's ardent gaze
makes rosy cheeks blush on the
apples ; when the mower comes and lays the
tall grass low, while its sweet, dying breath
fills the air with delicious fragrance.

When the Muser lies down upon it in the sun and the Muser's cat Buttercup, likes to repose on it, too, and thinks it was cut down for her benefit — and the Muser is a child again and loves to talk to inanimate things and to listen to their answers ; to dream over the pleasures of nature, ever pleasant, ever instructive ; and to feel there is " no house like God's out-of-doors."

Old Time talks to the Muser about his children : You know Summer, don't you ? When you've been resting in the fields after a long walk, did you never see her, raising up the

corn and wheat, sending the rain over the fields where the grain is drooping, or pausing to paint the poppies and the bluebells? She's strong and hardy (she isn't like my pet Spring), her cheeks are like two ripe apples. My! don't the reapers like to see her coming through the fields with her pitcher of cider and brown bread and cheese?

She's with me awhile, and then she goes away as Spring did. Children are like the little birds, who cling to their parents and the old home, while the loving father and mother birds with untiring industry, fly here and there, all day, to get them food, contenting themselves to eat the undigested worms that pass through the little ones.

Like human fathers and mothers, who deprive themselves of all comforts for the sake of their children, who oftentimes go away and leave them to suffer in their old age. We know one father who bound himself out for years to get the money to give his son a medical education.

Ah! said old Time, the miseries and cruelties and disappointments of this mortal life!


Have not I seen all of it, from the day when Adam and Eve were expelled from their beautiful home in Eden, with the curse (so called) of labor resting upon them? But it wasn't a curse, it was a *blessing in disguise*. Had they been doomed to a life of perpetual idleness, it would have been far worse!

But I am telling about my girl Summer. When the bright sunshine lies with a warm embrace on the waiting Earth and lures her to do her best; to redden the fruits, to gild the grain, to paint the flowers with richer hues.

Well, I'm old, and am getting garrulous as most people are when they talk about their children.

CHAPTER X.

THE LOST RIVER.

E have spoken before of the beautiful, broad, salt water river that ran by the old-fashioned garden.

How bright and clear and sparkling its waves, white-capped in winds or storms!

In spring tides large fish could be caught out of the lower garden gate. In mild weather the children caught tomcods for a meal for the pet cats. One cat knew enough to fish for herself from the rocks that bordered the next garden.

The Muser's mother remembered of hearing older people tell, that vessels were formerly built at the upper end of the river and launched down its channel, this being dredged out every five years. In summer, boats glided up and down. The school boys enjoyed bathing in its pure waters.

Two large sand banks afforded amusement

to the Muser and her companions; between these sandbanks a large garden extended far out into the river, and at low tide it was deemed quite a feat, to walk cautiously around it, on stones picked from its wall, to the larger sandbank. There, what sports were enjoyed! ovens were made by placing the feet deep in the sand and banking them over with it; statues were modelled in the damp sand; more joy, more treasures, were excavated there than California miners ever knew.

Bathing houses were at the foot of several gardens; one at the Muser's, where it was a health-giving pleasure, on a summer day, to plunge into the refreshing water.

How beautiful were the sunsets reflected in the river when Sol sent his ardent, lingering gaze on the earth! What glowing crimson, till the waves shone like wine! what golden yellow, like the outreaching radiance of an unknown land, whose "gates ajar" seemed to open for us! when the Earth wrapped herself in the gray mantle of twilight, and, ere she vanished from our sight, lighted the stars, one by one, to aid us on our way.



VIEW FROM UPPER GARDEN.

Then the river in Winter ! still beautiful in its icy covering. What pleasures it afforded ! The swift skaters, gliding and whirling, making figures on the smooth surface ; the Muser's brother with them, dragging her on her sled, as he sped along like a winged Mercury ; fires built on the ice ; children dragging their sleds across to the opposite hills for a coast. Such shouts and laughter rending old Winter's ears, regardless of his cold breath or his icy fingers !

But, alas ! the scene is changed !

The beautiful river has been polluted by tanneries and sewers. The mistaken judgment of the City Fathers, instead of having it dredged and cleaned, and keeping it, as a source of health to the city, as all streams properly cared for are, has filled it up and the place that knew it knows it no more. The beautiful river has returned to its father, Old Ocean, in disgust and despair.

Opposite the Old Fashioned Garden, on the other side of the river, were high hills with broad expanse of level land on the top, covered with grass and high forest trees, oak, wal-

nut, etc. This land reached to the road. The hills on one side sloped down where the river sent a small creek as far as the road. On the other side of this road were rocky bluffs and a nut grove. Only three houses could be seen : a farmer's with a fine orchard of russet apple trees, a small cottage opposite, and a three-story house farther down.

All this side of the river was called *Paradise*, and it was worthy of the name. But, as the serpent entered Eden, so the destroyer of natural beauties entered this lovely place. Bought by one who had no appreciation of the beautiful, cut up into house lots, regardless of anything except the money value ; tanneries established, polluting the river which was made a receptacle of their filth ; driving away the fish ; almost poisoning the dwellers on its borders ; the city officials refusing to have it dredged and cleansed, although an agriculturist offered to do it for nothing but the deposits, then — filled up to make land for city officials who needed some. The Friends had a large part of Paradise to pasture their horses in, and they could often be seen frolicking

among the trees in unrestrained freedom. The Muser has cause to remember two incidents that happened in her childhood in Paradise.

One, going a-Maying there with young friends, she strayed from them towards a rocky cliff to pick some flowers and was only saved from falling over it by her friends' timely calling.

Another, going a-nutting with a small party in the nut grove (once spoken of), having filled their baskets the party prepared to go home, when they saw a number of boys coming towards them down the hill. The girls ran (girls in those days were afraid of boys) and left the Muser, who was smaller, to her fate, which was to be robbed of her nuts and sent crying homewards; but she recognized one of the mean thieves and on reaching home was sent to tell the boy's mother, who sent him up with what he said was his share of the nuts, and to say that he was sorry. So the Muser had some unpleasant memories of Paradise.


The health-giving river, unappreciated by

ignorant, money-seeking men, was sent back to old Ocean, to the lasting regret of those who lived on its borders !

Beautiful River ! health-giving, joy-inspiring, sparkling, clear, bright ! no more shall the eyes that loved to look at thee, find thee ! No more shall the dying sunbeams cast their glorious tints on thy waters. But, O River, memory will bring, to some who lived by thee and loved thee, visions of what thou wert, preserved forever ! And the land that was once called Paradise is now desecrated by mean dwellings and foul tanyards and is indeed *Paradise Lost* !

CHAPTER XI.

MY SCHOOLMATES.

OW many of my schoolmates have walked with me through the Old-fashioned Garden. My schoolmates —where are they now?

Ask of the summer breezes where are the bright-hued petals it shook from the wild roses that lined the hedges ; or of the autumn wind whence flew the thistle-down its rough gales swept around, or the gold and crimson leaves it sent floating from the trees.

And yet the bright eyes and rosy cheeks, the girlish forms, are still there when Memory takes me with her down the lane of long ago. And first among them, one of the dearest friends I ever knew, Emily, "Little Emily," whose musical voice is still sounding in my ear, the rosy flush on her cheeks, that flush which told of the angel beckoning her away in her early girlhood, before the cares of this life had come around her, or its pains and

bereavements saddened ; before any " Stere-forth " had crossed her path and taught her the meaning of the line " And to make idols and to find them clay."

The little post-office comes to me now—the three correspondents Emily, Harriet and myself. What imaginary individuals we personated ! what thrilling accounts passed between us relating to the adventures of those personages ! This recalls another post-office which was placed for privacy in the attic of the schoolhouse and reached by a long, projecting board (at the risk of going through the plastering), over an unfinished part.

How many notes and letters, signed with the names of different animals, were stealthily carried up and over the dangerous causeway and dropped in a box beneath.

No country postmistress or *master* (for curiosity is not confined to sex) ever peered into a letter more eagerly than we.

Two faces come before me now — one dark as night, with eyes like soft beaming stars ; the other of the Saxon type, large, blue eyes, and light hair.

They were very much older than I was. I, shy and timid, but attracted by their beauty, would turn (unnoticed as I thought) and gaze on them often ; till the voice of one, " What are you looking at ? " would turn my dreaming into a hasty flight.

I have since solved the problem worked over then ; the beauty of expression in one face explained it.

The pleasant, kindly looks of one of the older girls who occupied the desk before a young friend and myself, encouraged a few, playful sallies on our part.

Sarah wore her hair done up twist fashion, with an extra coil descending in a loop around and below. This bore such a resemblance to an old-fashioned knocker, that, to relieve the tedium of study hours, I could not refrain from lifting it, and inquiring, once in a while, if Miss Sarah was at home ? I see the pleasant, smiling face, even now, turning round with a laugh ; and I think she enjoyed the joke as much as we. She lived to make me happier, and the little folk who came after us, with her pleasing, instructive story books.

Another, Ellen, with her round, happy face, bright blue eyes, dimpled neck and arms, with a breath sweet as the cows in a summer meadow. Ellen, whose girlhood's surroundings promised a happy life, who gave to the world a book that indicated genius, but whose sad fate (from no fault of her own!) brings its shadow before me. And Mary, the life-long friend, who has spent twenty-five years of her married life, in travelling, with but short intermissions of rest—how souvenirs from her came every few weeks from all parts of the world, in the shape of reindeer moss from the North Cape; pressed tropical flowers, still retaining their glowing colors; Edelweiss from Switzerland; Gentian from the edge of the geysers in Yellowstone Park; snow flowers from the Yosemite; with letters of love and remembrance.

And Mary Ann and Almira, Love and Harriet, Eunice and Maria, Helen, Mehitabie. Martha, Augusta, — but why should I enumerate? all are there when Memory leads me back through the years, and bids me enter the old schoolhouse once more.

Some of the teachers had the failing — I had almost said the *crime* — of being partial. If there is anything I despise in a teacher it is that ! It is far worse than corporal punishment in its severest shape. It has disgusted many a youth with school life and deprived him or her of the education for which they longed. It has crushed the aspirations of many a rising scholar, who has seen the mean, cringing schoolmaster or mistress view the pupils through gold spectacles, associate the favored ones with their parents' wealth, and pass unnoticed the diligent strivings of the poor and friendless.

There was one teacher in this school of whom I shall always retain pleasant memories, Miss Hannah S. I can hear her now, with her sweet, musical voice, reading with a fine Scotch accent, the "Lady of the Lake" to us.

The master was of a facetious turn, enlivening the school hours with many jokes. Perhaps he amused himself as well as his pupils ; but they

" They laughed, *not* with *counterfeited* glee.
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he."

Who of his scholars does not remember his large eyes directed fixedly at any one inattentive or whispering? It was his rule "to fix us with his eye."

We were told we might do anything at recess except tear the school-house down; a liberty of action fully indulged in. The old apple tree in the playground can testify to our trapeze-like performances, climbing high and swinging out from the boughs, then jumping to the ground. Once we climbed a neighboring shed, but the owner, not seeing it in the right light, ordered us down.

But one theatrical performance occurred; a play *sans* scenery, *sans* wardrobe, and almost *sans* performers. The play was to be Cinderella. The heroine, Ann, one of the court gentlemen, Sarah, myself the Prince. Another Sarah, one who always made large promises, to us credulous school girls, of the varied tropical fruits, cakes, etc., she would bring, was to furnish the collation. It proved, as we might have expected it would a Barmecide feast. The grand affair was to take place at recess, sewing afternoon.

Sarah No. 1 had brought some suits of her brothers' clothes for the Prince and the gentlemen of the court. Her name was taken to lose her recess for some misdemeanor, but, nothing daunted, she got down behind her desk and crawled down the aisle unseen, and made her way to the scene of action.

We withdrew from the rest into the sink-room where stood an old porch (the intended dressing-room). Sarah No. 1 had just arranged herself in her masculine habiliments when, unfortunately, her absence was discovered upstairs, and a messenger (not put down in the play) appeared with a mandate she dared not disobey, and clapping on her gown over all, she went back to the school-room with a long face.

The rest of the affair has fled my memory ; but the above came back to me the other day, when I found a brown silk slipper with a rosette on the top, among my many pieces of dresses. This was worn on the occasion by the Prince. We did have a little collation, I remember, although Sarah No. 2 proved recreant, as usual.

Two of the scholars, sisters, were constantly quarrelling together. I used to look at them and wonder why two of a family could not agree.

Some of the richer scholars annoyed the poorer ones by inspecting their dresses, making remarks on their appearance and trying to make them feel uncomfortable. I recollect in particular, one poor girl from a neighboring town who was striving to get an education, who was often the subject for unkind remarks; her mother kept a little school and from her scanty earnings sent her daughter to this private school. It is said "the mills of God grind slowly but surely;" I believe it. I have lived to see her persecutors brought lower than she ever had been.

Great attractions at the hour of recess were the shops we frequented. One opposite the school; the other, old Ma'am M's (as she was familiarly called) lower down. All must remember the two rounds of nut candy sold for a cent, and the two-penny mince pies.

Much has been said about the almighty dollar, but only school boys and girls can

appreciate the almighty cent and the varied edibles it can purchase. I recall one obliging shopkeeper, a Quaker lady, who even allowed us four different kinds of candy and sugar-plums for a penny; fractional parts of an ounce, to be sure, but then — four kinds! Truly the shopkeepers of ye olden time must have inherited a stock of patience from Job.

The smaller girls had something of the spirit of the freshmen in college. The larger ones would sometimes criticise us, and we, if we could create a sensation among them — it was rather pleasant.

One day a few of the younger ones arrived at the schoolhouse first. The key was kept behind the front-door blind. It was the work of a few moments to unlock it, to pass through and out of the back door, to relock the front, put the key in its place, and returning, enter by the back way. Then the plotters entered the library, took their places in a closet under the stairs and awaited results. The larger girls arrived, came in talking and laughing. Just as they entered the library, we, afraid of detection, drew the door of the closet, which

stood open, slowly to. Such an utterance of feminine shrieks and a stampede to the front yard! while one voice, heard above the rest, exclaimed, "I saw the door move slowly to!" A feeling of great satisfaction pervaded the little band of girl freshmen, at the want of courage in their elders; but the secret was faithfully kept.

It was the custom of the teachers of the afternoon sewing school to read while we worked. The story which one of them selected had in it the distich of Old King Cole, that funny old fellow who came with his fiddles three. Some of the girls, filled with the spirit of mischief, induced the teacher, by praising her voice, to vary the exercise by singing it. This she was foolish enough to do. But if she never repented of anything else, I am quite sure she did of that, for the schoolroom rang with the melody at every recess for a long time after.

One of the scholars sat reading novels behind her desk cover, day after day, then would take her place in the class with no lesson. One who was in the habit of appearing with

no lesson disappointed her teacher in an unexpected manner; when the teacher said, in a sarcastic way, "Well, Miss S., no lesson as usual, I suppose," "No, Miss T," returned the pupil, "it isn't no lesson as usual," and proceeded to say it.

Another, who could number on her fingers the questions before hers, would be startled sometimes by the master's exclaiming "Well, Miss K—, counting noses as usual?" But no stop was put to these scholars' unfaithfulness. What their tuition money was paid for, I failed to see.

We had earnest workers and good scholars, however, among us. Also pleasant school-girl friendships, many of them lasting ones. The large playground, with its broad spread of grasses, buttercups and clover, gave plenty of room for races and other games wherewith to exercise our limbs. The old schoolhouse was demolished a few years ago, and the place that knew it now knows it no more. I have a sketch of it, but I think many of the scholars could construct it from memory.

Old schoolhouse! How many pictures of


joy and sorrow, idleness and labor, partiality and injustice, your memory awakens !

Old schoolmates ! sundered by age and time and death ; yet ever remembered and thought of — but always appearing, as then, young, fresh, eager for life's joys and attainments.

How can we disbelieve in the immortality of the soul, when even the youth of the body keeps its freshness and immortality in our memories through the years ? We will not disbelieve it, but will feel that all that is beautiful and good and true rises in a better world than this, still beautiful and good and true. And that from this earth, the old schoolhouse of our infancy, we shall graduate, educated, refined, made better by our hard lessons, into the glory, strength and activity of a higher life.

CHAPTER XII.

GARDEN PICTURES.

 ANY pictures, old garden, come up before the Muser's eyes. A little lassie, scarcely taller than the high grass, fair haired, blue-eyed, standing under the apple trees in Spring, when they were robed in a mantle of pink blossoms and the new leaves were fresh and green on the trees.

* * * * *

Another in Fall, when the apple trees, loaded with their abundant yield, held out their ruddy cheeked fruit to meet the sun's warm kiss; when the gatherers worked gladly and busily to pick the abundant crop. When the trees in their prime yielded thirty barrels of their excellent fruit.

* * * * *

In Winter the two hills formed an inviting but dangerous coast. A friend, bringing in a small sled named "Jim Crow," belonging to

her brother, the Muser, as steerer, mounted with her and away we went, down the two hills, clearing the trees, but driving through the old fence, taking off a board on our heads, and breaking the top of the sled. Fortunately there was a space beyond the fence preventing our going into the river.

* * * * *

There is a time when the beautiful grass, after receiving the caresses of the rain and the sun, and waving in the soft airs of Summer, must, like all things mortal, be cut down ; but even in death, its fragrant breath seems to say "forgive !" The Muser loved to lie upon it breathing its delicious perfume, looking up to the tall trees, listening to the songs of the birds, the rhythmic rustling of the leaves, the buzz of myriad insects ; gazing on the beautiful river, going to or coming from the ocean, and looking up at the clouds on their heaven-taught journeys to parching lands.

* * * * *

A picture of a little maiden, working, planting, weeding, toiling up hill with baskets of weeds, or fagots of broken branches of trees

for the open fireplace; toiling on day after day (and getting health and strength by it) till, growing old (but young at heart as ever), the weakened powers refused to carry heavy loads; but the eye (thank God for one of His best gifts!) still takes in all the beauties of Nature with undiminished pleasure.

* * * * *

Another, and never-to-be-forgotten picture. The mother bending over her pot plants she had cherished all Winter and planting new ones with a never failing pleasure; or sowing seeds, saying she would see with what body they would be clothed. Her passionate love of flowers her children have inherited as a precious legacy and memory. She loved trees. From the horse chestnuts she planted have come tall trees higher than the house. She has passed away, but as Hood wrote

“The trees are living yet!”

The elder brother loved to walk around the Old-fashioned Garden and admire the plants and flowers, but was not so fond of working in it as the mother and sisters were.

I have spoken of the beautiful roseate flush of the peach blossoms in Spring. The Muser for several years followed the practice of planting peach stones and small peach trees. From the stones came trees of excellent fruit. A farmer said when he bought small peach trees for Crawfords they most often turned out to be not Crawfords but very poor peaches. But, he said, when he planted the stones of Crawfords they produced Crawfords.

The Muser's experience was the same. Stones from a good peach produced the like or something better. One of her trees bore large, white, soft-skinned fruit; this she named "Snow Flake." Another large, soft-skinned, white with rosy cheeks, ripe in August, she called "Maiden's Blush." Another resembling an apricot, smooth skin, bore small, crimson fruit in clusters like alder berries, very beautiful; afterwards had red and green foliage like autumnal tints. How easy it is to raise your own fruit, by planting stones or small trees every year.

The chief pest to be guarded against is thieving boys, against whom the laws are not

administered. This ignoring of their crimes, adds, in a great measure, to forming a poor foundation for future manhood. Some one has written, "Let me write the songs of a Nation, and any one may make the Laws." I would alter this and say, let the boys be taught morality and the men will not be immoral.

So common sense should teach, let us educate the rising generation to good moral habits and the future generation will take care of itself.

* * * * *

Another garden picture. The sisters rescuing a pet yellow and white kitten which had climbed up a tall locust tree and was afraid to come down. After meditating awhile, the Muser got a small, pasteboard box fastened it on a pole and raised it up. Two heads turned skyward; four eyes anxiously watching, the little thing stepped into it and was safely lowered.

* * * * *

One of the most pleasing pictures in the Old-fashioned Garden has been, and is, the pretty English, or, more properly speaking,

the European sparrows. They have now more friends than enemies. The horticulturists and the agriculturists in Europe would laugh at the idea of their being anything but useful birds, or of the idea of their doing any harm. They eat the larvæ of all kinds of insects, the lice around tree buds and plant buds; they destroy full-grown insects, canker-worms and moths that eat clothes.

A pleasant picture in Spring is of the female birds with their little ones round them in a circle feeding them with canker worms. This has been witnessed by too many to be denied.

The Muser's elder brother used every Spring (before the sparrows were brought to this country) to tar all the apple trees as a preventive against canker worms. After the sparrows came this was found to be unnecessary, as they freed the trees entirely from the worms.

These little birds are busy scavengers also, freeing the streets and back yards from particles of filth that cause malaria. They have been accused of driving away our native birds. This is preposterously false! the cruelty of

men and boys shooting them, foolish, culpable women wearing them on their hats,—these are some of the causes of the scarcity of our native birds. Add to this, when our birds, robins, for instance, go south for the winter, they are ruthlessly slaughtered and sent to Boston and other large cities to be sold for food. Reed birds (bobolinks) have become a favorite dish, served on toast. They are used in great numbers at hotels, boarding houses and in private families. The demand is greater than the supply — so the southern dealers kill our robins (which look like reed birds), cut off their heads and pass them off for them. One dealer alone in North Carolina sent 6,000 in one week and a few weeks after 3,000, making nearly 10,000 birds! this was *only one dealer's* doings. Who wonders that we have fewer robins at the north now? The only wonder is that we have any! don't blame the sparrows. As cities become larger and great gardens disappear, of course most wild birds seek country places.

Not only in the Old-fashioned Garden but in countless gardens and yards have the little

sparrows given pleasure to the old, the young and to invalids. They have made our winters pleasanter, and cruel and heartless he must be who could refrain from throwing them food in cold weather, poor little exiles from a warmer clime ! It has been said they have but one note ; this is incorrect. They have several : their common chirp, their love note, one to call their little ones and a note of alarm.

What if they do soil a few houses? If people would set up a few pine trees, or a few bird houses to shelter them, they would prefer these to perching behind blinds. The pleasure they give to the many and the lessons of trust and cheerfulness they teach, more than counterbalance a few dirt spots easily washed away ; and the lessons they teach are beneficial and lasting and God-sent.


When the snow covers the ground in the Old-fashioned Garden and the wind is cold and chill, what a lesson of trust is it, to hear these small birds piping their little song and waiting for food as we should wait for a higher power to aid us in life's winter.



FORGET-ME-NOT BOWER.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WOOD RAMBLE.

OW many excursions have the Muser and her sister made into the woods with their friends to different places to collect ferns, wild plants, trees, etc., for the Old-fashioned Garden! One excursion stands out vividly in the Muser's memory,—that to Ship Rock, an enormous boulder, that Professor Agassiz said was the largest boulder in the state; its dimensions are 45 x 25 x 22 feet; estimated weight eleven hundred tons. Boulder means a round stone. This great rock is far from round, it is three-sided. It is said to owe its name to one side of it resembling a vessel. But tradition has it, that some sailors, who deserted from a ship in Salem harbor, fled to this place (then very lonely), and climbed daily to the top of the rock to watch when their ship should sail away.

But to return to the party. A car on the

steam railroad (we had no electrics then) was filled with a party with happy faces and merry hearts in early morning, bound to the woods. A band, going on some excursion, filled the car in front; so the party was preceded by martial music. Reaching their destination the party alighted except one unfortunate, who, being deaf, remained and was carried a short distance on the car before the gesticulations of her friends could stop it.

Then by twos and threes we marched, passing by two solitary graves whose occupants once hailed the morning light in this beautiful place and began their daily work with light hearts. Up hill we went, climbing over huge rocks, carrying our plentifully-laden luncheon baskets.

Reaching the Rock, we sat down to rest. Some of the party had never seen it before; many and loud were the exclamations at its size and height. An iron ladder had been put up by the Essex Institute who owned it and a little land around it.

Now—to ascend it to the top to see the prospect for four miles round! The most ven-

turesome climbed up assisted by the gentlemen of the party. But—the coming down! Oh, that was fearful to some, the Rock being high. Many ohs, ahs, and other interjections were heard and enjoyed by the wise ones who remained on terra firma. Near the Rock, the Muser saw a little basin formed by the roots of a tree, filled with rain-water where the little, wild birds could get a drink.

Soon the party separated, some one way, some another, to search for flowers and woodland treasures. Then a shriek rose in the air, then a stampede was seen in one direction and voices were heard saying that a noise sounded above them in the trees, shrill, like that of a harvest fly. It was thought to be a rattlesnake as that is the sound he makes and rattlesnakes used to be plentiful in Lynn woods. Then some of the strollers discovered a trap, set to catch some little inmate of the woods. The string was cut by them and the trap destroyed in the interests of humanity.

At the foot of the hill on which the Rock stood were found *Mitchella*, *maianthemum*, *trillium*, *wintergreen*, *bunch berry*, etc.;

these were gathered to carry home. After two or three hours the busy pickers, gazers and ramblers were now ready, with good appetites, for luncheon. What a gathering there was—shall I say around the festive board? ah! no; picnic fashion, seated on rocks or on the grass, the well-filled baskets passed round amid merry jokes and accounts of adventures. Pleasant ramblings in the afternoon and a pleasant ride homeward finished the day.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHADOWS.



THE Muser has often thought how beautiful are shadows! in their likeness and more in their unlikeness to the realities, they suggest to the eye the difference there is between sculpture and painting. In their want of color, and calm, death-like beauty, they lack the lights and shades of statuary; but then again, they possess a life it is without, for they dance and play on old walls, fences, pavements, indeed everywhere, with the joyous, flickering motions of vitality.

These unreal images are often more beautiful than the real; the silhouette of yonder tall branch of spiræa, with its seed vessels, resembles more a handsome plant in full bloom. These shadows lack light and shade; but then there is a denser hue where masses of leaves hang one over the other. They are

indeed sun paintings; they must have first suggested pencil drawing.

How beautiful is the broad, spreading shadow that a great tree casts on the rough ground! a carpet of curves, scallops, undulations. How perfect the pattern, how harmonious the effect! Hogarth truly called the curved line, *the line of beauty*.

How we turn away from buildings framed by man, with their right angles, squares and straight lines, to rest the eye on the pleasing curves placed by Nature on almost everything around us! When the architect of the future shall appear, curved lines and gently rounded walls will take the place of angularity and primness.

Then our buildings will no longer stand in too striking contrast to nature's beauty and unobtrusiveness. Then our buildings of the present style — a conglomeration of all known styles, staring at the passers-by with their motley colors and bizarre effects — will give place to an architecture that will harmonize with nature in form and color.

How pleasing is the shadow of a cloud,

and what beautiful effects does it give the meadow, field and forest! How lovely are water shadows! differing from those of the land as they depict color. How refreshing and cool the brown shadows of the roadside stream! the pebbles cast theirs in the bottom of it; the grass, fringing the sides, holds its sun-heated fingers over the water, and its reflections stretch forth their tiny fingers as if to grasp them. The pond lily, as its white cup with its golden oars floats on the surface, sends an inverted one down, as if to search for a lost naiad beneath.

Around the edges of lakes and ponds, how attractive are the shadows! almost more vivid than is the reality, whether verdant in Summer's robe or rich in the crimson and gold binding with which Autumn enfolds her latest treasures.

And the last, long shadows of declining day — how they stretch down the hills and over the greensward! hanging back like a weary child, who knows that night and sleep have come for him, yet lingering where the warm sunshine has lain and the happy hours

have passed. It has been said that "the things unseen are the real," and so things intangible may be more real than those we touch.

The eye is never weary in looking at shadows. We tire when gazing long at man's arrangement of bright flowers, especially at unnatural ribbon beds, and carpet patterns that show that the love of nature has degenerated; but the calm, neutral-tinted shadow never wearies. I will only add a few thoughts more that have found expression in another form, hoping that those who have not found pleasure in these spirit-like followers of leaf, flower and tree may do so.

O beautiful unreal! the fern's clear shadow
Sun-painted on the parlor wall,
Each rocky nook, each stream and meadow,
And wildwood flowers can here recall.

On the old fence oft-times the shadows dancing
Of grape leaves, playthings of the wind,
Phantoms upon rude canvas glancing,
Bringing a spirit-language to the mind.

Ship-shadows on the silvery billows
That freightless glide upon their way —
A woman's shadow on the pillow
The soldier kissed as sick he lay.

Smile, look, the shadows of man's spirit,
Love casts in greeting on the face —
Signs from the angels we inherit,
'Mid earthly cares a heavenly grace.

Shadows of heaven, from good deeds falling,
Heaven's sunlight paints on earth's dark walls,
To the soul's eye the unseen real recalling,
Though oft dull sense heeds not the voice that calls.

CHAPTER XV.

A FRIEND'S GARDEN AND STRANGE FLOWERS.

IN the lower part of the city where the Muser lives was a beautiful garden ; not as pleasing to her as the Old-fashioned Garden and other old, rambling gardens of some of her friends, but pleasing from the masses of brilliant flowers that bloomed there every season. This garden was very large, situated on a back street, bordered one side by the ocean ; a summer house with stained glass windows on that side. Irregular flower beds edged with paving stones were filled with all the rarest flowers the owner could collect. A small building in the centre of the garden, for rest, was furnished with sofa, chairs, desk, etc., the lower part being used for garden utensils ; a trellis in front covered with a fine grape vine. Rockeries, here and there, with all kinds of plants that liked to grow on rocks. Ponds were there, filled with aquatic plants ;

choice trees and shrubs were there, and no season (Winter excepted) was without its flowers.

The owner was a cultured gentleman, a learned botanist. It was his recreation, after banking hours (he was cashier) to go down to his garden at four o'clock in the afternoon and work among his loved plants for hours.

The Muser and her family had a standing invitation to visit the garden; although it was not taken advantage of very often on account of the distance from their residence. But one visit to it dwells in the Muser's memory. She went alone; entering it and locking the gate as was customary.

It was a warm summer day; a beautiful blue sky above her, masses of lovely, fragrant flowers around her; the butterflies, like winged flowers, flitting from blossom to blossom; the bees humming, the birds flying round and singing their glad songs; no other sounds—still and silent—it seemed a complete isolation from the world, the world of toil, care, labor, distraction! and in describing it to a friend she said, it seemed like the

Garden of Eden in its peace and restfulness, in its beauty and fragrance — and there was no serpent there !

How many hours of healthful exercise, of peaceful rest and quiet had the owner and his friends found in that garden ! How many generous gifts of flowers and plants had they received !

How many beautiful bouquets had adorned the pulpit of his church, where, no doubt, they preached to the hearts of those whose eyes rested on them, sermons of love and forgiveness and that " He, who careth for the flowers, would also care for them." And some, no doubt, recalled these lines—

" Were I, O God, in churchless lands remaining,
Far from all voice of teachers or divines,
My soul would find in flowers of Thine ordaining
Priests, sermons, shrines."

The owner of that garden has passed on to his new life ; he bears with him his gentle spirit that loved his fellow men, and his love of God's most beautiful creation,—flowers. His love of flowers and his daily intercourse with

them produced the following poem that is worthy of preservation.

These are some of the owner's thoughts he has clothed in verse :

"A GARDEN IN WINTER."

" Where have the waxen lilies fled?
And where the fragrant rose?
Where have the fairy-faced pansies hid?
Not one quaint beauty shows.

Gone before the withering blast,
Of the north wind's wasting power :
And crystal clouds their white robes cast
Over every leaf and flower.

They withered before its icy breath,
And every plant lies low.
Its kindest touch was the touch of death.
Naught else could it bestow.

Victory complete does the ice-king boast
As he covers his trophies o'er.
Increasing most where destroying most
What could his wrath do more?

Step lightly, for under the frost-bound earth
Soft leaves and infant flowers,
Lie waiting a new, a spring-tide birth.
Under warmer suns and showers.

Made glorious in their summer dress,
Shall leaves and flowers appear,
Once more shall fragrance and brightness
Fill the measure of the year.

A wintry garden over the way
Absorbs my gloomy thought;
Where night succeeds declining day
And joys to grief are brought.

The marble shaft, the graven stone,
The myrtle, pine and yew,
Mark the abodes of the dearest ones
That ere affection knew.

Behold! "behold! a mystery I show,"¹
These shall not always die!
Loose, loose the fettered chains below,
Mount upwards to the skies.

Such is the lesson that faith imparts,
Though the buds of hope decay.
The immortal germs of honest hearts,
Shall awake to endless day."

* * * * *

STRANGE PLANTS.

We are not so much impressed with the wonders in every common, familiar plant and flower as we are of those that are strange, and whose existence in strange places, under

¹ I Cor. 15: 51.

difficulties, we cannot comprehend. A small red plant lives and grows in hot springs in the arctic region; plants grow there and blossom under ice and snow. Plants live and grow on the floating islands of seaweeds and chance débris, on the bosom of old ocean. In deserts, without water, dry, wind-swept, little plants still live.

It is related of Mungo Park, a distinguished traveller, that, lost in a great desert, friendless and hopeless, he lay down to die. His eye fell on a small plant in bloom near him. He gazed at it and thought the same Power that preserved the little plant would pity him and save him; and, taking courage, he walked on till he came to a hut where he was fed and cared for by a kind Indian woman who sang as he ate, "He has no wife to bring him wood, no wife to grind his corn."

* * * * *

"Picciola, an Italian prisoner, condemned to imprisonment for life, was an infidel. He saw no justice in his bonds; he had no hope in this life, and was without the cheering hope and faith of the Christian, who, under all the

trials of earth, can still look forward to a better life to come.

" But, one day as he was pacing over the stones of his floor, weary, listless, lifeless, almost insane, he spied two green leaves starting up between the stones. He looked at them, he wondered that any life could start in such a place. He knelt down — yes, it was a little plant ; the surprise made him feel an interest in it. He took some of his water and watered it. He had something to think about, something to care for. Every morning, even before he ate his frugal meal, he knelt down to examine it, to see how much it had grown. It grew taller day by day, he was glad the sun sent in a few scanty rays to warm it, he kept part of his water to refresh it. It seemed like company to the despairing prisoner. It rewarded his care, it flourished, it grew taller and taller. One morning he made a discovery, he saw what looked like buds ! A new delight ! How careful he was of it now, how afraid something would happen to it ! At length the buds began to expand, the flowers to show ; they were a beautiful

purple. He loved it and he reasoned within himself that some power must have created these lovely flowers, this beautiful plant, and his thoughts went up to God the Creator. His unbelief had vanished.

He became sick, and dreamed in his illness, that the leaves of the plant made into a tea would cure him. And it did! so he was cured morally and physically by this little flower God sent."

Who shall say that flowers are not teachers, healers, comforters, companions?

How agreeable are the perfumes of flowers and how varied! The love and appreciation of them are shared by animals as well as by men. Poisonous flowers warn us by their odors. The fragrance of some plants is distasteful to some animals and reptiles. It is said that every species of snake may be permanently driven away from an infested place by planting geraniums. In South Africa the Caffir people thus rid their premises of snakes."

"A missionary of South Africa had his parsonage surrounded by a narrow belt of geraniums, which effectually protected the

residence from any kind of snake. A few yards away from this geranium belt a snake would occasionally be found. It is well known that the whole geranium genus is highly redolent of volatile oils—lemon scented, musk scented, and peppermint scented. What therefore is a very pleasant nosegay for man, is repugnant to the serpent tribe.”

* * * * *

It is said “that travellers in Siberia tell of a wonderful flower that grows there, and which blooms only in January, when the winter is at its height. The bloom has something of the characteristic of a ‘morning glory,’ lasting only a single day. The flower, when it opens, is white, star-shaped, its petals of the same length as the leaves, and about half an inch in width. On the third day the extremities of the anthers, which are five in number, show minute, glistening specks, veritable vegetable diamonds, about the size of a pin’s head—these are the seeds of the flower.

“A Russian nobleman named Anthoskoff, took a number of the seeds to St. Petersburg. They were placed in a pot of snow and frozen

earth. On the coldest day of the following January, the miraculous flower burst through its icy covering and displayed its beauties to the wondering scientists. The plant has been very appropriately named 'the snow flower.'"

* * * * *

"There is a strange plant in China that grows at the rate of nine inches every twenty-four hours, without earth or water. It looks like a bulb, as large as a huge Indian turnip. A captain of a vessel brought it to this country. It lay during the greater part of the winter in a dark closet, and then it began to show signs of awakening from its long sleep. It was taken from the closet and set in an ordinary peach basket, with nothing about it except some newspapers. A mottled green stalk pushed its way out of the top of the bulb and grew at the amazing rate of nine inches every twenty-four hours, until it reached the height of eight feet, one inch; it bore a lily, and then began to wilt. Of this total height, the pistil or tongue issuing from the cup of the lily represents four feet, one inch. Cup and pistil are both of a beautiful maroon color.

The flower and stalk will gradually wither away and drop off the bulb. The latter will then be planted in earth, and in July and August will show a great, umbrella-like spread of foliage. In September this, too, will wither, and the bulb will go to sleep for the winter."

An old miser once said to the Muser as she was working round her flowers, "What are flowers good for? Cows won't eat 'em!" And the Muser answered, "God made the flowers, He never made a useless thing! Gold is not the best thing on earth."

The following lines, the name of the writer unknown to her, express her thoughts:

"Oh! the peace of the heart of Nature!

Oh! the light that is not of day!

Why seek it afar forever

When it cannot be lifted away.

Let Nature be your teacher;

Sweet is the love that nature brings;

Our meddling intellect

Missshapes the beauteous forms of things,

We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;

Let go those barren leaves!

Come forth! and bring with you a heart

That watches and receives.

Ye botanists, I cannot talk like you,
And give to every plant its name and rank
Taught by Linné, yet I perceive in all,
Or known, or unknown, in the garden raised,
Or nurtured in the hedge-row or the field,
A *secret something* which delights my eye
And 'melliorates my heart."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THOREAU FIELD CLUB.



HE elder sister and the Muser instituted this Club and it was so called in honor of that lover of nature. The members have not his hermit spirit; they do not "love nature less," but their friends more. The ticket, the badge of the Club, designed by the Muser, has on its face a basket of ferns and a trowel, with the name of the club beneath—the ferns representing the aesthetic qualities of the members, and the trowel the hardy endurance that enables one to walk miles in search of a flower, carry a heavy basket, and heed neither heat nor cold.

The first meeting of the Club was to be at Seabrook, N. H., to gather *Epigæa repens* (trailing arbutus), or Plymouth mayflower, the last name the prettier.

It seemed strange to me, in reading a book on flowers written by an Englishman (I think

it is "Ramblings of a Rural Botanist"), the author says he does not know why this flower is called Plymouth mayflower. It needs one of the descendants of the Puritans to tell him.

Annie T. Howells' suggestion, in a letter to the New York Tribune, that the mayflower or trailing arbutus should be adopted as the floral emblem of the United States, is highly appropriate. This writer gracefully refers to the welcome sight afforded the Pilgrims, on their landing on an unknown coast, by the presence of this familiar flower, as narrated by Whittier :

"God be praised" the Pilgrim said,
Who saw the blossoms peer
Above the brown leaves, dry and dead,
"Behold our *Mayflower* here."

Several circumstances occurred to diminish the number of excursionists; two weddings, severe colds, trains not connecting, and one member said "it was too cold;" but on the intimation that her want of endurance might result in the loss of her ticket of membership, she said she would attend the next meeting if it were anywhere except the polar regions.

She was informed that the next meeting would be at the north pole.

We sought the arbutus, one of the loveliest little flowers that Spring places in old Winter's lap ; looking shyly up from its hiding places among the brown leaves and sending its woody fragrance on the breeze. We had telegraphed to know if there were any snow, and if the mayflowers were in bloom. The answer was satisfactory ; so the little party started except two who, arriving late, stood baskets in hand, just in time to see the train depart.

Baskets ! one of the members had a wood basket, so large the Muser christened it Abou Ben Adhem, for it led all the rest. The next largest, she called "Great Expectations." Later in the day some of the others were christened. The basket of one lady, who said "she was perfectly satisfied now she had seen the arbutus actually growing," was called Satisfaction ; that of another, who had a superabundance of provision, the Good Samaritan ; while that of still another, who grieved that she had so few flowers, the Disappointment ; and so on with names elicited by the occasion.

The day (that much abused portion of the passing year) was fair, the sky cloudless, the air fresh and invigorating. We could find no fault with it. We felt like the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, perfectly satisfied with it.

The baskets reminded me of those we used to carry berrying in childhood, capable of holding quarts, but on the return, with a few blackberries, blueberries or thimble berries in the bottom.

My basket had been filled beforehand (in imagination) with the pink and white blossoms. I had made (in imagination) bouquets, tastefully arranged—one for a patient, sick friend who, long, long months, has been confined to her room, her only glimpse of nature the hanging garden of elm leaves, and the fitting, chirping sparrows in their nests.

The pleasure of the excursion was enhanced by the thought of the sweetness and beauty they would bring to her. Other of the bouquets were to be carried to aged friends, whose feet no more had the activity to gather them.

But, alas ! it proved like the milkmaid in the fable. But I will not anticipate.

On the road down, the fields looked brown, but the farmers were busy in the different places ploughing ; their straight furrows showed skill and industry.

We had been advised to select on our arrival, as guide, one of the boys who gather arbutus to sell to passengers. We did so, rather mistrustfully, it is true ; for we knew from experience that not much dependence was to be placed on the rising generation. He proceeded with us a few steps, then gave his place to another boy. We advanced a little farther, when the two spied a fire in the grass between a house and a fence, and left us.

We stopped to see the conflagration. One of our party ran into the house and brought out two pails of water ; the boys buffeted the fire with their caps, and these united efforts extinguished it. When it was nearly out, the woman of the house made her appearance and coolly said she supposed her little boy must have set it !

Judging from the license now given children, I rather think she was right.

Once more we put ourselves *en route* with our boy guide. He ran on at a double quick-step, and as the way lay between young trees and shrubbery, we found it difficult to follow. We found plenty of leaves and buds, but no flowers.

We soon saw the aim of our guide, which was to gather what few flowers there were, to bunch up to sell, which he did afterwards. He was soon out of sight, and the party hunted arbutus for themselves.

It was very backward; we were informed later, that one year it would be plentiful, another scarce. This year was the poor season. Those who thought it was too cold to go on the expedition should have seen us at this time. A healthy glow overspread every face.

We then determined that our baskets should be filled with something, and they were. It was then voted to return to the depot and lunch, which we did.

Some of the party had ascertained that a temperance meeting was being held at the

small Advent Church. Going there they found quite a spirited meeting. At the collation which came after it, they were invited to take mugs of hot coffee. Explaining that they came to gather arbutus, the good lady who presided, said that was no matter, and insisted on their taking it. This good Samaritan act was appreciated.

In the afternoon half of the party set out in another direction. We passed a noble grove of tall pine trees growing on a circular piece of ground as large as any church in extent. As we looked through its dim aisles, the trees standing at about five or six feet apart, their tall columns seeming almost to touch the sky, from out their slender tops, swaying in the breeze, came the low rhythm of nature's hymn which ceaseth not day nor night.

The Muser gave utterance to the thought of all,—“A temple not made with hands.”

Farther on we came upon the finest picture it has been my lot to see for many a day; one well worth the journey. A broad, wide brook that in some places would be called a river, with its brown, changing hues, and fit-

ful shadows ; over it a rustic bridge of planks ; the borders lined with tall pines of the most vivid green ; on one side of the brook, beneath these trees, cakes of ice covered with spotless snow, the white winter ermine contrasting with the foliage. A road cut through a high hill at the end of the bridge, stately pines on the summit, some bending with their roots half exposed. It reminded me of scenes in Switzerland. A little girl led the way — quite a contrast to our boy guide of the morning — who modestly said, when rewarded for her trouble, she didn't expect anything, which made it more of a pleasure to give.

When assembled together before leaving, the party expressed the greatest satisfaction in the excursion, especially those who had never seen the mayflower growing before.

We had a pleasant ride home, and reached Salem in good season.

I think it was Sancho Panza who said "Blessings light on him who first invented sleep." I think the members of the Thoreau Club, as they laid their heads on their pillows that night, could heartily say the same.

CHAPTER XVII.

GREEN AND BLUE.



THE Muser thinks that green and blue are the most beautiful colors on this earth.

It would seem as if God loved them the best, else why do they predominate above all others?

Spring brings them first of all, covering the fields, woods and mountains with part of her beautiful green robe, clothing each little plant with its hue, before the other colors blush into life.

How the tender blue spreads over the sky, and we give it a welcome after the leaden, gloomy clouds of Winter! How it drops into streams and brooks and invites the sunshine to go with it!

How grateful these colors are to the eyes! we never tire of gazing on them.

Nature has been lavish of her blue in painting the sky, but chary of it in tinting the

flowers. We do not find many blue ones. We may be charmed with the rich tints of crimson, yellow, pink and purple, but the eyes love not to rest on them as they do on blue and green. Blue flowers seem more retiring than bright hued ones that flaunt in the sunshine.

Green is the summer dress of Mother Earth. True, she wears often a breast-knot of bright flowers, but, as these are the gifts of the Year's children, Spring and Summer, she cannot well refuse them; but she holds her green robe closely around her bosom with a tenacious grasp, even when Winter with strong hands seeks to wrap an ermine mantle around her.

Old Winter cannot quite drive away the tender blue of the sky, storm he ever so loudly; but it smiles down upon us, and the stars, as night comes on, shine down with their friendly eyes as if to cheer us.

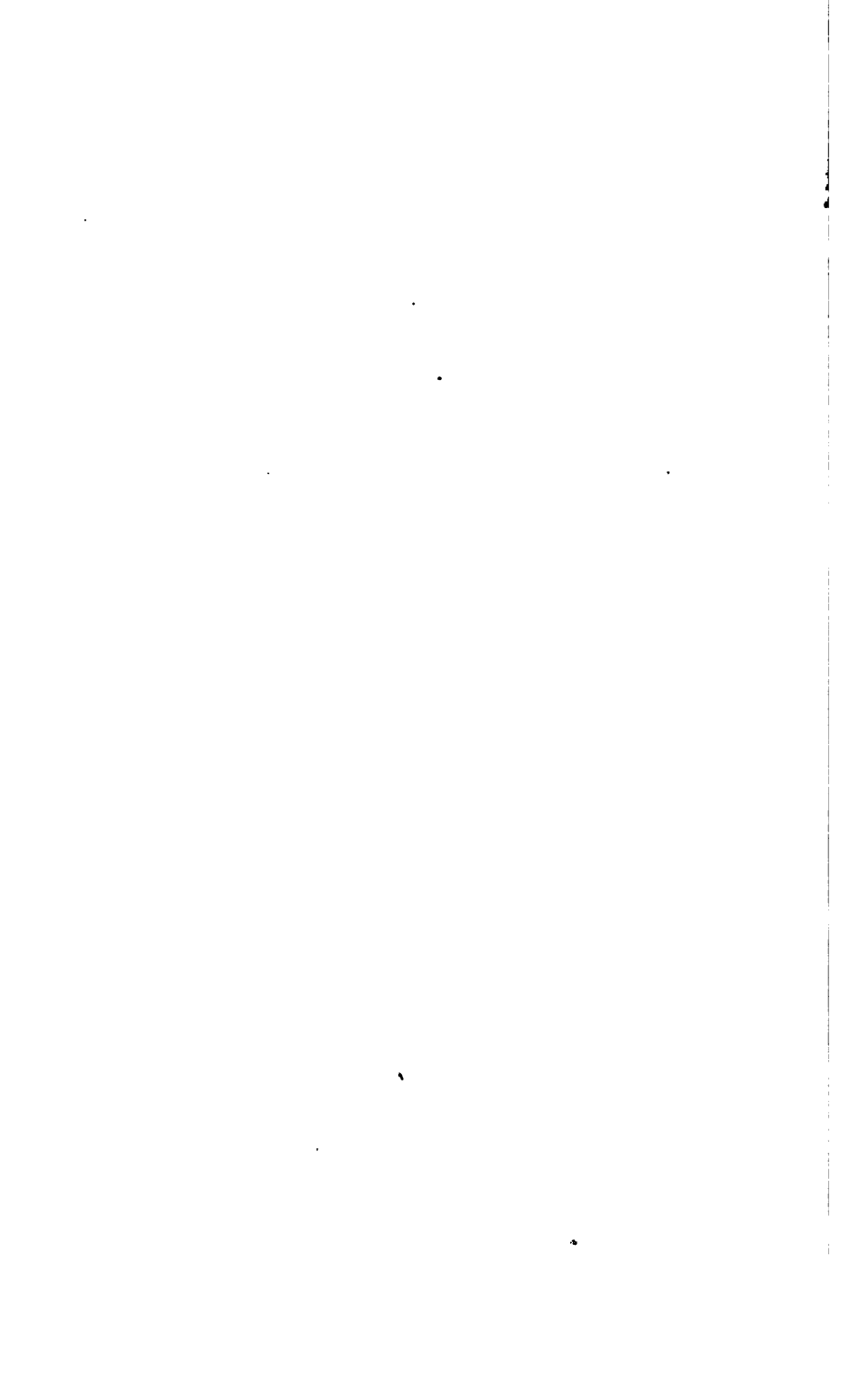
How the little child loves to run through the tall grass spires waving their fringes in the fields, to seek nature's gold, the dandelion.

How the old man, resting on a grassy bank, dreams of his Spring, his Summer, while he

is waiting for the Winter of life that will shut him in with its white mantle of weakness, into the house to rest from his labors that will soon be finished. But, before he is quite shut in, as he sits at the door, and gazes up at the blue sky above him, that tender blue holds for him the past, the present and the future, and images that Heaven to which he is drawing near. Blue and green ! beautiful types of God's love and tender care, restful and soothing, who does not love them ?



INSPIRATION POINT.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SALEM TURNPIKE.

"Though much has changed and much has vanished quite,
The old town pastures have not passed from sight;
Delectable mountains of our childhood, there
They stretch away into the summer air."



HE Muser has been dwelling on the memories connected with the old Salem Turnpike. What a stupendous undertaking was the planning and executing it. It far exceeded in magnitude the cutting of the Suez canal or the spanning of Brooklyn bridge, for it was before the application of steam or electricity to common needs. Opposers were not wanting, as in every great undertaking. Wiseacres prophesied its non-success, for it implied all that was mentioned in the old hymn,

"Bring down the proud mountain, though towering to heaven,
And be the low valleys exalted on high."

And more—for there was a bottomless pond (which our English cousins would call, and

truly, a lake), and this must be bridged over. Notwithstanding all these difficulties the road was undertaken; and soon the shanties of the workmen dotted the hills, while the inhabitants of the City of Peace, who looked upon it as a grand undertaking, walked up every evening after the labors of the day to gaze and admire.

The entrance to the turnpike was adorned by a row of buildings called negro huts.

Before you came to these was a well-known baker's shop. How well we children remembered the gingerbread horses and "shays" and the Jim Crows baked in that plastic material! No sculptor rejoiced more in one of his successful modellings than we in the contemplation of these.

The bakers in those days were not wealthy or aristocratic enough to send out from one to a half-dozen carts, but humbly pushed their edibles around in hand-carts whose tops resembled the child's plaything called Noah's Ark.

This baker had a large custom, but the nearness of the colored folk brought them also,

and tradition has recorded that there was a wonderful flow of eloquence, gestures, a show of ivory teeth and rolling eyeballs, when they thought they did not have all their money ought to bring.

The stories related by these folk filled quite a place in childhood's memory.

On our May parties and berry excursions, how stealthily we hurried past one old negro hut where a murder was said to have been committed !

The small house at the end was inhabited by Black John, who distinguished himself by taking a white wife ; as the law forbade such unions then, he went by night to the minister, and his lady discreetly kept her veil down during the ceremony. Imagine the talk and the consternation of the clergyman when the fact was known.

One of these colored people, who rejoiced in the nickname of Ginger Wellman, made a very good living by counterfeiting a runaway slave. She would knock at people's back doors and commence : " dear, kind lady, please give a poor runaway slave something to eat

and some clothes ; my old master beat me and I ran away ! look at the scars on my back !” And the scars were exhibited—but the origin of these scars was never known.

These families of colored people moved away or were taken away by death, until at last but one solitary family remained ; and the old lady of the home, sitting and thinking, no doubt, of the good old festive times at ’lection, and of the stage coaches that had ceased running, told some one who passed, that “it seemed like Sabber day all the time.”

Election day was celebrated (as I have heard), in the settlement, with the greatest hilarity—with fiddling, dancing, games, fortune-telling, etc.

Everything seemed so joyous and festive, that an old lady said, she remembered wishing she were a little negro girl to join them.

The work on the turnpike progressed rapidly for those days. Passing the negro huts and ascending a hill, we came to a cart track on the left leading to the place where stood the powder house, regarded by childish eyes with wonder and affright. With what stealthy

steps and bated breath the flower-gatherers and berry-pickers crept by, as the whisper went round, that the nails in their shoes might ignite a grain of powder and cause an explosion ! Would that the young folk of the present day had this wholesome dread of explosives !

The pastures in olden time were safe places for children to roam in. I remember an old lady's telling that when she was quite young she was sent miles up that road to gather sundew, and thought nothing of danger.

But the so-called tramps (the fruits of lax parental discipline, and the false sentiment which has so long curtailed the teacher's authority and usefulness, by calling the *punishment degrading* instead of the *crime*) have made all these beautiful but lonely places dangerous.

Three farms on the turnpike, near Salem, have been for many years the property of a father and three sons, well known and respected.

Once the turnpike was celebrated for its pure air. But not far up, a glue factory has

been established, and in passing it the gales are not of "Araby the blest."

After the turnpike was completed a small toll-house was placed not far from the entrance of the road.

The pump of clear, cold water, still remains there, and the old willow, near by, hangs out its tassels in the Spring.

A place above, where, after rains, the water flows over the stone wall into the road, has been named "The Bowl," by one of the old pedestrians, who walks often over the old road.

Just above the second farm two roads branch off: the one to the right towards Peabody, the one to the left towards Swampscott; the latter is sometimes called the Cook road, from a worthy but eccentric individual of that name who built a small house there, placing on the top the American flag. There he used to sit and muse and write poetry; until some hoodlum boys (regarding whom Fontaine has expressed the truth "C'est un age sans pitie") destroyed his little house by fire for their amusement.

Beyond these cross roads was formerly the Mineral Springs Hotel, once a famous resort for those who supposed themselves benefited by its waters. But methinks more life-giving power lay in the fresh air taken into the pedestrian's lungs in the exercise of walking over the hills and vales of the road, and to his organs of sight in gazing at the wide panorama spread before him.

The Salem part of the turnpike ends at Floating Bridge Pond, a beautiful sheet of water, that seemed a marvel to childhood's eyes, because it was said to be fathomless. This bottomless pond was crossed by a floating bridge made of timber and fastened to posts at each end; and to this day, no better has been found to supersede it.

For many years this bridge would be submerged in part when very heavy teams went over it, and timid persons were afraid to cross it; but it became firmer as it acquired bulk, by every additional repair, placing new timbers on the old ones, till, as a gentleman informed me recently, it now contains timber enough to reach up to the second story of a common-

sized house, the bottom of the pond seemingly as far off as ever.

This floating bridge gives its name to the pond which, when "Autumn woods have put their glory on," presents a glowing picture, with the crimson, gold and green mirrored in its waters.

At the entrance of the turnpike was a high, rocky bluff called Norman's Rocks; here was the King's Arm Chair, so named, and the loyal youngsters would climb up and seat themselves in it, with all the royalty of childhood.

Not far from this were the Sliding Rocks; one was steep as well as slippery. How we envied the daring of the boys who would rush up and slide down in quick succession! What an unfailing, never-ending delight were these slides, although to the detriment of sole leather. A few years ago the Sliding Rocks and the King's Arm Chair were blown up to make room for modern improvements. For the old turnpike has been rechristened Highland Avenue, and the Wenham water has found its way to the first farm.

The products of these pastures were varied and numerous. Here the *Houstonia* spread its starry carpet over hill and dale; here the columbine nodded its honey bells; the *arethusa* gave its delicate bloom to the swamp; wild roses blushed and sweet briars scented by the wayside. The wild azalea with its snowy petals and singular fruit, so called, the gorgeous red lily of summer and the fall aster, bloomed on. The woodwax gilded the hills and the whiteweed spread its countless blossoms.

Pictures of these pastures still linger in the Muser's memory: pine trees by the old, gray rocks; little lakes here and there in hollows; broad brooks singing as they flow and gurgle on; vistas opening through the hills and stretching far away.

Memories of Salem turnpike linger yet; memories of flower and fruit, of pine trees and running water, of brown-eyed kine, of golden sunsets, of fleecy clouds, of rosy-cheeked companions, of long summer hours of healthy pleasures — memories impressed

on the Muser's mind at a time when they are fadeless.

Winter's snow may cover your hills, Time's snow may whiten the locks of the quondam eager rambles, but the pictures and the memories of youthful days are still of Summer and of sunshine.

How familiar the new road became to the little feet in search of flowers and berries, every child can testify. Who does not remember Columbine Hill, on the side of the valley through which we could see four of Peabody's spires? or the Cranberry Swamp, where of late years a sign board was put forbidding intruders?

One of the delights of childhood was to stand at the Great Pasture gate, when opened for the dismissal of the cows at night. How they marched out single file, red, white, black, fawn and mottled, casting glances at the little folk, with their kind, brown eyes, their bells chiming a pleasant music; while the monarch of the herd, sent to his nightly quarters, the town pound, protested against it with his deep, bass voice.

But the greatest pleasure connected with the turnpike was, to be allowed on a Wednesday or Saturday afternoon to go to Ware's barn. We enjoyed the reality of the reverie of N. P. Willis' old man, for "we hid in the fragrant hay, and whooped the smothered call, and our feet slipped up on the seedy floor, and we cared not for the fall." The pitch of the barn was exceedingly high, and a strong swing dangled from the ridge pole. How breathlessly we watched the boys carry the swing up on a loft, and seating themselves launch away until their feet reached the opposite wall and back and forth until the vibrations stopped. What a pleasure it was to feed the long row of cows standing in their stanchions and pat their heads! The large hay-cart, placed in the middle of the barn, was a chariot in which we could safely ride. The old watch dog joined us in our sports, and the afternoon passed all too quickly by, when, sunburnt and happy, laden with flowers or fruit, we walked home with our mates, the long distance unthought of.

On opening the road a toll-gate was estab-

lished not very far from the Salem entrance. The fine well of water near it has refreshed how many weary travellers! to how many has the old seat in front given a rest! Had a register been kept at the toll-house of its many visitors, how interesting it might be at this date.

The hills round the Salem turnpike are noted for the extensive prospects that can be seen from them. It has been, and still remains, one of the favorite walks outside the city. One hill, from the fine views obtained from it, was called Lookout Hill; when the fight between the Chesapeake and the Shannon took place in the harbor, these hills were covered with spectators, spy glass in hand.

But when the railroad with its iron bands entered Salem, when the stage coaches ceased running, and the toll-house was given up, making it a free road, then the old turnpike ceased to be an object of interest to travellers. But it still remains a monument of honest labor, built substantially and well, a contrast to the work of the unfaithful contractors of our day, who lay their plans more with regard to

their own gains than to the health, safety and lives of those who pass over their bridges or inhabit their houses.

But, Old Turnpike, thou hast still a claim to be remembered ; when Spring sits upon thy hills, offering her blue and gold to the lovers of nature and the little children who seek them ; or when Summer winds blow back the locks of the berry-pickers ; or when Autumn spans each hill with her rainbow of colored foliage, and her golden grain gives earnest promise that springtime and harvest shall not fail. And also in the memories of those whose feet often wandered up the road in search of flowers, but whose steps have gone up higher.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOOD PARTY.

IN the late, beautiful October days when the sky is of a cloudless blue, when "the wind breathes low, and the withering leaf scarce whispers from the tree," on such a morning the Muser with the elder sister and a small party took the cars at the South Reading station, Salem, intending to be, for one day at least, happy vagabonds!

Passing through Northfield and Carltonville with their busy, manufacturing establishments, by Harmony grove, that sleepy hollow where so many of our loved and respected ones have been laid away in their last slumber, rushing by the pretty station at Peabody, with its fountain in front; on, on, till we leave dust and din, and rest our eyes on grassy meadows and changing foliage.

After a twenty minutes ride we arrive at the West Danvers Junction, telling the attentive

conductor who assisted us to alight that he must be careful of the school-teachers, that they had taken care of boys a great many years, and now the boys must take care of them; to which he assented, adding something we did not hear, but which we supposed must be something witty, as he indulged in a laugh. We turned down the Boston & Maine railroad track, fringed with the last autumn flowers, tall pines clad in green livery, pointing skyward, while between every two or three, oaks of a rich bronze mingled with yellow or a vivid crimson tipped with green, made a charming contrast. Along the rude rail fences alder bushes (the American holly), loaded with crimson berries, stood like valiant soldiers, ready to do battle with the frost.

So on the party went, loaded with luncheon baskets, fern books, fern boxes, and all the *etceteras* needful; when lo! a snake on the track—and the advance guard gave a shriek! but was immediately silenced, from prudential motives, as the snake glided from where he was taking his sun-bath into the bushes.

Reaching the Newburyport turnpike, we

walked a short distance, and crossing a field, we were soon on our knees collecting.

But when were treasure hunters ever satisfied? we remember that sweet fields beyond contain better far, and we are soon in marching order.

Arriving at the place, behold a cow, sentinel and guard of the wished-for treasures. One of the party volunteers and uttering a succession of shouts that would have done credit to the Indians, the cow, having a knowledge of boy human nature, and thinking that the enemy had come, made off to tell a companion at a distance, and both agreed to disappear.

And now collecting began in earnest—*Mitchella* berries, the largest we ever saw, *pyrola*, winter green, bleached ferns, etc.

Many and frequent the questions and exclamations—"What do you call this?" what a beautiful specimen! look at this green moss! see these perfect fronds!"

When baskets and boxes were nearly full, it was agreed to find a new way out, but at the end of it was a high rail fence. The most

active of the party were soon over ; but others reminded me of Mrs. Gilpin's ride to Edmon-
ton.

John Gilpin's celebrated ride we all remember, but I think few have heard of his wife's. A sketch of her, as she appeared, mounted on the top of a high rail fence, having on a large, old-fashioned bonnet, with the subjoined poem in the handwriting of Cowper, was found among the papers of the late Mrs. Unwin :

“ Then Mrs. Gilpin sweetly said
Unto her children three
“ I'll clamber o'er this stile so high
And you climb after me.”

But having climbed unto the top,
She could no farther go,
But sat to every passer by
A spectacle and show.

Who said, ‘your spouse and you this day
Both show your horsemanship,
And if you stay till he comes back,
Your horse will need no whip.”

Our unfortunate ones were helped to dis-
mount, and after a short walk we reached our

inn, the station, where we lunched. The obliging ticket-master brought us clear, cold water from a well near by. If this were not the well that had "the old, oaken bucket," its water could not be surpassed by that.

A nut-grove opposite induced the most restless spirits of the party to start again, jumping a ditch and crossing a bog to get to it. The sweet acorns were picked up and appreciated, we remembering not to take too many on account of the squirrels, recalling the meanness of a man down east, who used to rob the poor things of their collection of walnuts and sell them, until found out by his neighbors.

We had returned to the station with the exception of three laggards, when, behold! one appears in haste, and reports that a member of the party who had been 'miring everything, is herself *mired*!' In jumping the ditch a tussock gave way, and in she went foot first, to the depth of two feet. The bog dirt that she longed to carry home was not in the right place, and the human being does not thrive in it as well as the plant.

The mingled advice of the party made the

sufferer as comfortable as could be expected, and after a short rest we started once more in search of maiden-hair fern.

We found the place covered with briars and brambles, into which a few penetrated at the expense of their clothes, the appearance of which gave us the impression that this must be the field that the enemy had sowed with tares.

We came back to the station once more ; an hour and a half to wait for the cars.

We remembered a beautiful locality not far off (they never are), across the track, up a hill, across a broad field, through an orchard, where some of our Eves nibbled the forbidden fruit. The place was even more beautiful than we expected, a valley between two hills, carpeted with ferns, overshadowed by tall pines, a refreshing place for a warm summer's day.

At the station once more, we returned a vote of thanks to the ticket master for his kindness during the day.

The telegraph wire ticked on its busy talk far away, while we conversed and rested, or

walked out on the platform to gaze at the sunset, and there is no place where it can be seen to better advantage ; a broad expanse, a background of changing, many colored trees, high hills at the side, stillness around, dark pines against the sunset sky, bringing out the rich colors of the dying day, and after this "slow fades the glimmering landscape on the sight."

The hour of departure arrived, the party embarked for home, agreeing that the day had been perfect, and that, take it all in all, they should not look upon its like again.

CHAPTER XX.

FLOWER PICTURES BY THE WAYSIDE.



THE Muser looks at the flowers by the wayside, flowers painted by the great Artist on all the hills. Not hung in gilded saloons or viewed by gas light, but beneath the blue dome of the sky 'mid the golden sunlight. No question of good or bad lights here ; each one looks up in the face of day smiling and beautiful.

It seems as if the Lord God were walking in His Garden, for here are his footprints, the flowers !

The *Genista tinctoria*, no, we prefer the common name woodwax or woodwaxen (as it was called of old), borders one road with its gold ; and farther on the sweet briars four feet high, covered, as Brainard the poet sings, with " The little four-leaved rose that I love best," perfume the air.

Another road is fringed with the mayweed rivalling with its profusion of white flowers

the exotic marguerite which however cared for and tended is so chary of its bloom. Here the mullein (called the velvet plant in England and cultivated in gardens) holds its candle stiffly by the way, with a few yellow flowers on the top like an expiring flame.

THE MULLEIN.

O Mullein! growing on the road's rough side,
With your warm mittens 'gainst the earth's brown face,
Holding them flatly and as if you tried
To pat her cheeks with all an infant's grace.

The raindrops stand like jewels on your leaf,
Its coat of wool heeds not their gentle kiss—
Goblets for fairies; yet the feast, how brief—
Nor would your felted floor their footsteps miss.

Light up your candles for the traveller's eye!
Your yellow blooms stand timidly apart;
For peerless beauty they may never try,
Yet find a loving place within the heart.

The eyes that knew them in the long ago,
When childhood's feet for luscious berries roved,
Would miss along the hills thy candles' glow,
Lighting the woodland paths so known and loved.

The creamy elder is fast losing its blossoms
and the thick clusters of berries are putting on
their rich wine color.

Here and there in the fields are tall stalks of nodding meadow lily, we had almost said ready to ring a call to prayer. But what need of it have the innocent creatures around them? "What have they to seek from the fields of Heaven? they have no need of prayer, they have no sins to be forgiven."

And who would wish to shorten their short lives? Why, man of science, so called (often a name for cruelty), why teach children to impale butterflies and bottle insects, when the souls of children and youth would grow wiser and better by studying their outward beauty and teachings?

The agrimony is here with its yellow stars forming its green burrs before the blossoms drop.

The indigo plant with its butterfly petals, "on tip-toe for a flight," as Shelley says of the sweet pea.

The early goldenrod is waving its yellow plumes; no wonder that the Indian called it squaw-weed in honor of his gayly-dressed partner.

“Coin of the highway, see the Golden rod;
The currency wherewith to buy, a smile;
Ore of the sunshine, minted by the sod,
And heaped for Nature’s traffic by the stile.”

Over the rocks and brambles by the roadside, how gracefully the wild morning glory trails its delicate sprays covered with beautiful pink blossoms! and there the wild rose that seems to give a blush even to the old stone wall. The true milkweed with its handsome, pink flowers and the mock milkweed with its ball of sweet smelling blooms that attract the insects to a feast.

On our way we have passed gardens containing ribbon beds of different patterns. We can only wonder at the taste that seeks to pervert nature! for who can improve her work?

We pass houses whence the angel Death has led men forth, and vacant dwellings, out of which the inmates departed long ago.

So “man’s busy generations pass!” but the flowers bloom on year after year.

They look up and answer the question “If a man die shall he live again?”

Bright and beautiful, they rise from their winter graves, and light, heat and moisture are ready for their nourishment. And who can doubt that "He who careth for the flowers will also care for us?"

CHAPTER XXI.

AUTUMN PICTURES.



AUTUMN paints for the Muser's eye many beautiful pictures, and this is the way they are painted. First there comes a faint flush here and there, a scarlet edge to a green tree, crimson vines here and there fringing the old gray walls, or climbing up and mingling with the still verdant foliage. The apples look down with redder cheeks, like ruddy gypsy children who had known the caresses of summer winds and the sun's warm kisses.

Golden flashes also from hill to hill, as if each day's setting sunbeams had played at hide-and-seek and still wandered there! the grass of the meadows has its fingers tipped with yellow; one would think playing with earth's golden sands had made them so. The wild grapes look from the vines with a plum-like bloom. Elder-berries begin to wear their

royal purple. The fringes of the hazel nuts take on a russet hue.

But where is Summer? We look, and see only her retreating footsteps. But in the beauty around us we do not heed her flight.

Pictures here and there recall Millais, who painted the "Epics of the Poor," figures of bending men and women gathering in the plenty God-sent.

Fragrant hay perfumes the air. The wind is playing on the telephone wires like an æolian harp. What is the melody? It sounds like "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

The Muser looks again. The fringed gentian is gazing up with its shy glances from its covert of meadow grass; and by the wall the closed gentian, like the blue eyes of little babes that never open in the light of this world; closed gentian! that never uncloses except where the hands of science or curiosity tear it apart. And then, how its form, its color, its exactness, tell of all the beauty that the Father hides away for the eyes of His children to find.

Crimson tints grow deeper in the woods, signal fires on every hill. Nature is warning her dependents, that King Winter is on his way to lay them low.

God speaks to those who pass in every burning bush that lightens the solitude.

We gaze into a wayside nook—we see a carpet of green grass, gold and brown ferns, crimson trees arching over them; a woodland pool with all the shades of gold, brown, crimson, reflected in its depths.

It is good for us to be here. We have no need to build a tabernacle. Here are many not made with hands, where the sun is the gilder, the rain and the wind the polishers. Here are endless designs, borrowed from no earthly artists, and the builder and maker is God!

The Muser looks again. The trees are dropping their leaves; their branches stand out clearly defined against the blue sky. In the fields men are ploughing, preparing the ground for another Spring they have faith to believe will come.

The American holly holds out its bright

berries by the wayside, as if it said, "see! here is something bright left you yet." The furze of the clematis turns out its little puffs of down almost ready to fly. The squirrel is picking up his nuts, and man is gathering in the harvest.

What a mellowing effect autumn tints have on the landscape. There is nothing sharp or harsh, the roughest things are softened by their new coloring. The trees are fast losing their beautiful robes. But the earth is the gainer.

What brussels or tapestry ever showed such exquisite coloring, such wealth of design?

Nature is gazing into the forest pools—her mirrors—to see her own loveliness! The day is cloudy, but with these bright tints above and beneath us we do not miss the sunshine.

We look around us on the falling leaves, the last few flowers, the changing tints; we do not read decay—but fruition. The earth has sent them forth, they have done their work and now they drop into her bosom; while she preparing for her winter rest, for stillness and quiet beneath the winter snows, looks up in all her

regal beauty and says, "It is not sad to pass away when we have performed our duty, and have faith that we shall rise again in a new Spring !"

CHAPTER XXII.

LOVERS OF FLOWERS.

“ Plant flowers in the soul’s front yard,
Set out new shade and blossom trees,
An’ let the soul, once froze and hard,
Sprout crocuses of new ideas.
Yes, clean yer house, an’ clean yer shed,
An’ clean yer barn in ev’ry part;
But brush the cobwebs from yer head,
An’ sweep the snow banks from yer heart !”



IN the hammock the Muser meditates on lovers of flowers. How shall we classify them?

First, those who love only rare and high-priced ones ; who esteem them because they are fashionable ; who speak of common ones, as one writer did of the “ vulgar, red peony !”

They prize them as ornaments to garnish the menu ! to embellish a lady’s corsage at a ball ; to decorate their rooms for a genteel party.

They are proud of their conservatories and

priceless orchids; they spend vast amounts for these, more than would gladden many poor families and keep them from starvation, beggary and crime.

These have no love for the little wayside flowers, and look at the graceful weeds as a nuisance to be hoed up.

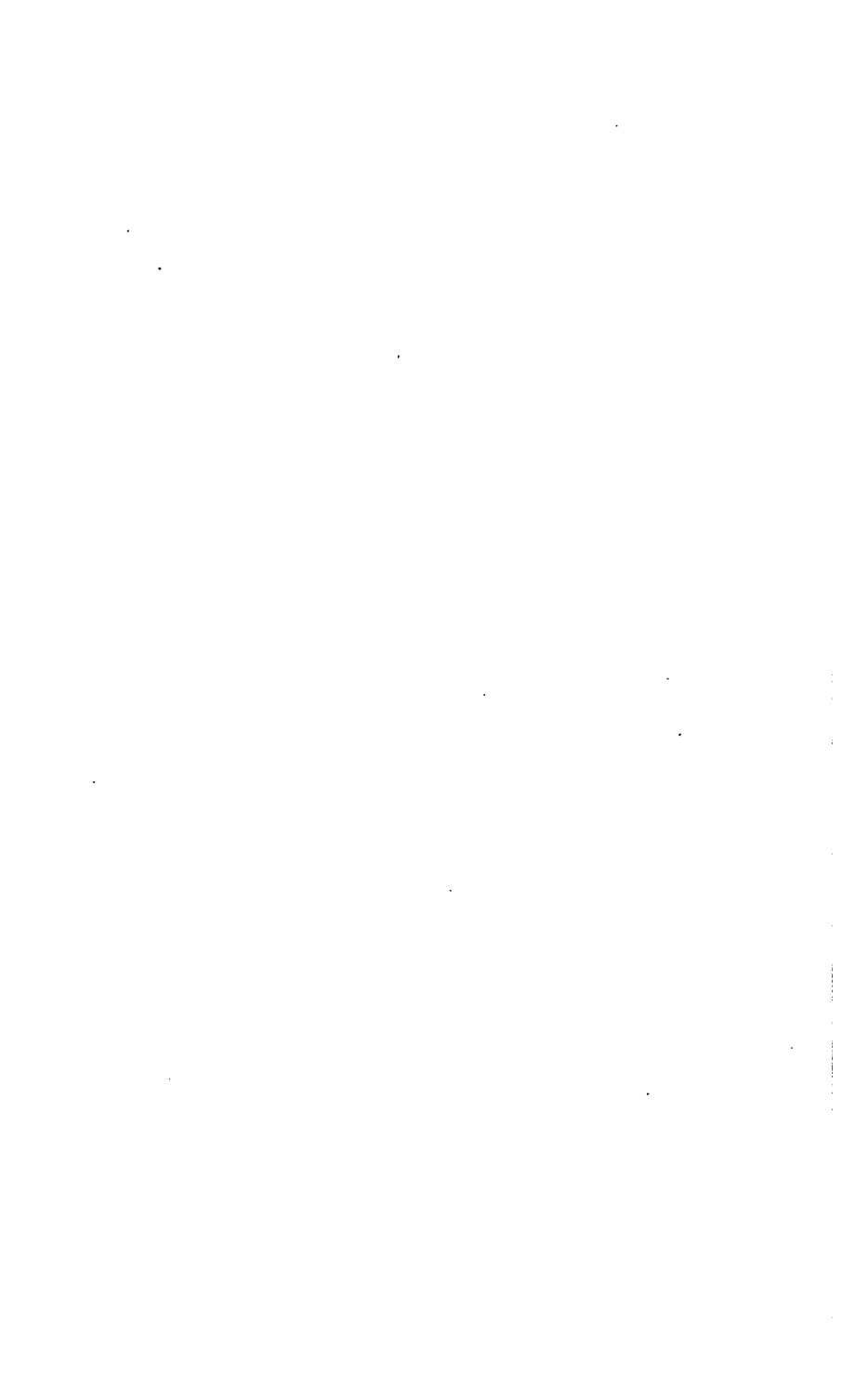
Another class have only a selfish pleasure in them. They like to fill their gardens with flowers, to admire them, to watch their growth, because their beauty and fragrance are pleasing to themselves. They seldom offer them to their friends as a gift; or, if they do, they select those almost out of bloom, shaking off the outside, fading leaves; taking a few of the most common ones, passing by those that are more beautiful and rare; cutting off very, very short stems, they are so afraid of losing one bud. They seem to think they are bestowing a great gift! when the probability is they will fall in pieces before the recipient gets home.

While again, there are others, who ask you to look at their flowers but never bestow any upon you.

Another class—those who prize them for



THE REST.



their money value ! who begin to reckon on the dollars and cents they shall gain (like the milkmaid in the fable), as soon as the plants start from the earth. They have no thought or appreciation of their beauty and fragrance. Their aspirations rising no higher than the wagon that carries them to market.

The above are flower misers.

Another class—those who love them for themselves, because they are God's creation. They learn lessons from them of the great Creator's love for man ; of His boundless generosity ; of His untiring watchfulness and kindness.

Some have said, " I love anything that is a flower ;" yes—and some love the despised and neglected weeds, and study their lessons and their uses. If you go into such an one's garden, you are almost afraid to admire any plant, for the first thing you know, the owner is plucking it for you and saying, " don't you want a slip or a root?" Nothing is too good or rare but it is offered to you.

" He loveth best who loveth all." Some are lovers of garden plants but care nothing for

wild plants. But the true lover of nature prefers them to cultivated ones.

Bold, hardy little things, that no man's hand has nurtured or cared for, how they rise up, each in its season, and say, "Here we are to lure you to the woods and meadows!"

How each is sheltered in the nook that is best suited to it!

How varied their growth and flowers! what a variety in form and hue! surely, there is variety enough to suit everybody.

And, best of all, they are free to all! Little children can walk into the fields and over the hills, and return with their mayflowers with no one to forbid or ask a price for them.

Blessèd wild flowers! mates of our childhood! Memory twines a wreath and hangs it on her wall.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GARDEN IN WINTER.

“ Lov'st thou thy garden still, though drear December
Hast cast a shade o'er all?
Can'st thou the glory of its Spring remember,
Its Summer joys recall?

Sweet solace of full many a moment weary,
Beloved and cherished spot,
As o'er thee Summers steal and Winters dreary,
Say! if I love thee not?”



YES, we love it for its bygone pleasures and its many pleasant memories. Did we say bygone? Nay, they are ever present and still exist. We cannot forget each Spring's resurrection, when, as Bishop Heber sings,
“ Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil,”
when the pale snowdrop looks up, the emblem of innocence, which it would seem Old Winter and Spring fashioned together out of the last snows and the first warm breezes.

It reminds us of one of the most beautiful designs we ever saw, one by a German, representing Old Winter entering a peasant's cottage where are the father, mother, and infant, and placing a snowdrop in the baby's cradle.

It is a pity that our American artists cannot bring more poetry and imagination into their pictures and make them creations instead of reproductions.

How the cheery crocus springs forth and laughs in spite of the biting wind; or the *Draba verna*, that little country cousin of theirs, sends on the telephone gale the news, that she is in good health.

We love the garden in Winter, for we are ever looking forward to the reappearance of the old, favorite flowers; for the happy moments we have spent in listening to the songs of the birds, or in watching the gay flitting or busy labor of the insects; in gazing at the clouds marshalled for the gathering storm, or looking afar at the gorgeous sunsets when the gates seemed wide open, leading to the Eternal City. And more, for the memories of those whose feet have walked there with us,

and whose thoughts and words linger still around.

What a fine view we have of the branches of the trees in the Winter garden, and how beautiful their shadows on the snow !

Our old locust tree, a veteran of two hundred years, with one side destitute of bark, still stands erect, and this summer hung out its scented white clusters as if to say, "I still live !"

Cremation is in vogue, and, old sentinel, when wholly dead, who knows but it may be thy fate? But, if so, methinks from the sweet-scented wood, blazing in the open fireplace, thy spirit will sing a soft dirge of the fresh green with which thou didst trim Spring's robe, of the snowy blossoms hung out year by year, and of the robins who annually built in the shelter of thy boughs. Yes ! old locust tree, what happier fate couldst thou have than cremation? to warm and make comfortable those who loved thee !

THE OPEN FIREPLACE.

And the Muser's thoughts dwell on the open fireplace ; she loves it although it in-

volves constant hard labor ; lugging of heavy back-logs, sticks of wood, tan, bark, kindlings, etc. Like the ancient Sphinx it cries, Give ! give ! give ! But its cheery blaze, its pyrotechnics, its sparks, its logs giving out soft sighings, like a lament for their former life in the forest, the gray ashes crumbling and dropping, the pictures traced in the embers (childhood's delight), the rosy apples in a row dancing and singing, chestnuts popping out, and corn sent in yellow appearing with a white head, for the little teeth to craunch.

"Man's life is like the sparks that go upward." How the flame typifies the soul as, escaping from its body, the wood, sent by caloric to rise above it, to feed on pure air, to glow and wave in seeming delight above its old tomb.

And the faces, the forms that have gathered around the old fireplace ! memory recalls them still.

The joys of the fireplace, the pleasant talks, the cheerful laughter, the happy intercourse of the home circle, all unknown to the present generation.

And to the lonely one, who has seen one by one the chairs left vacant that once were filled, the flame, as it glows and sheds a halo over the unforgotten past, points with its golden fingers above and, in its crackling and burning, voices a language which some hearts may understand, and seems to say "Gone up higher!"

Old Open Fireplace! relic of olden time! treasurer of remembered joys, tomb of past griefs buried in the gray ashes, thou art still retained by those who love thee for the old memories; for thy sanitary system that no modern heating apparatus can excel.

We love thee for thy pleasant warmth, thy changing beauties, where childhood could see pictures, and the eyes of age still love to rest; long may it be when the last open fireplace is closed up, and the places that know it shall know it no more.

* * * * *

In the Winter garden the little pine trees we have planted remain bright in their greenness, like winter friends; and the box, meriting its

name of constancy, peeps forth from every snowdrift.

Why should not the garden in Winter look beautiful? If now, we could have groups of large pines, and if we could at the beginning of cold weather make statues of the snow, to be placed here and there, would it not be?

We have often talked of this, and the other day, when the snow was soft, we modelled a large dog on the place where our plants stand in Summer. We persevered in the work (notwithstanding many knocks on the window with the startling intelligence that we would get our death), and waited for criticisms.

The old gentleman who shovels came on it suddenly, started back, gazed at it long, and spoke thus, "I thought you had a statue put there and I thought it would get dirtied. Why—its a setter!" A window was thrown up in the next house with the exclamation from one "How beautiful!" The market-boy said, viewing it a second time, after his first admiration of it, "that model's cute."

So, of course, we felt satisfied with the result of our labor. The next day it was of

marble hardness and prevented the finishing touches. The day after, old Winter dropped a white fleece over it, which suggested that a group of sheep would look well under the pine trees.

But when a violent storm of rain came, the setter was so reduced, that he seemed a fit subject for the Society with the long name. But the experiment showed that the garden might be beautified by statues, which a little care in renewing would keep in shape during the winter.


Urns might also be made, and bouquets of grasses, berries and laurel or other evergreen kept in them. We have had the red alder berries keep bright all winter, and when they glistened through their icy casing they looked more beautiful.

But the trees are not always bare, for does not old Winter cover them often with pure, white foliage and icy fruit that glisten in the sunshine? And does he not sing in every stirring gale to the imprisoned plants and embryo flowers the old song of "Sleep, baby, sleep?"

How, when he rattles at the doors and windows, he seems to say "I know why you keep me out; it is kindness to me, I could not live in your hot houses; and methinks," he adds in an undertone, as he turns away, "would it not be better for you, if you took a run out in the cold oftener than you do, and kept your rooms at a lower temperature? and then you would not be afraid of me."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MUSER TALKS TO THE GARDEN.

OW the Garden is old, and the Muser is old, and sitting looking at its familiar face, it seems to personify itself, and say, "How much you have done for me! In the beginning you excavated me from heaps of leather and dirt. You made me beautiful to look at with trees and plants. You made walks round me and stone steps up and down the hills, down which have walked how many interesting people. You have kept me looking neat, with weeding, raking, tending, watering, laboring, day after day for me. Have you been paid for your labor?"

And the Muser replied, as if talking to an acquaintance, "Yes! old friend, you have given me unspeakable pleasure, with your rosy face in spring looking out from the blossoming trees, with your fragrant breath from the violets and lilies."

You have given me health, when I clasped your brown hands in summer, working beneath the sheltering trees. You have held up pleasant pictures to my weary eyes. You have invited me to rest in your lap, and forget the cares and vexations of the day, and to dream pleasant dreams of a fairer land where are green pastures and still waters, where the soul's thirst and longing for a higher life is satisfied forevermore.

You and I, old Garden, have grown old together ! It grieves me, that I cannot keep you as I used to. I sit and see things that ought to be done, without the strength to do them—and can only listen to the birds, look at the flowers, trees and plants, watch the insects, and gaze at the clouds.

Then the Garden seemed, Proteus-like, to take many shapes ; and the trees, the plants, the flowers, appeared like the fauns and the wood-nymphs of old, and like the rustling breeze their voices, saying, "Learn this lesson, to be content ! satisfied with what you have done, enjoy what remains to be enjoyed."

CHAPTER XXV.

FAREWELL TO THE GARDEN.



AND now, inmates of my garden,
Trees, Plants, Flowers, Rocks,
Grass, before long I must bid you
a last farewell.

Old Apple Trees! I knew you in your prime, with your tender green leaves, your crown of pink and white blossoms, your little green fruit growing larger from day to day, till Summer painted its cheeks rosy with her warm kiss; your boughs bending with luscious fruit in Autumn; the gathering, when you yielded your rich offering with seeming pride.

And when in winter, how around the open fireplace your apples in a row on the hearth sang, sputtered and talked of their old mother, the Apple Tree!

And you, Plants of my raising! how I worked to make you grow, planting, pruning, watering.

Forsythia! how you shook your golden bells when you danced with the Spring breezes!

Violets! how you sent up your fragrance in gratitude to the one who loved you and cared for you.

Columbine! the elder brother's favorite flower, red, white, pink and purple, how you waved your honey bells Spring after Spring, to the inmates of the Old-fashioned Garden.

A kind thought even to the little rambling Moneywort and the graceful Herb Robert, that gave me so much trouble.

Farewell to the Box, that has stood so primly in the borders, so many years; that signifies the constancy the heart gives to what it loves.

And you, old Locust Tree! standing firm to your post, like Roman sentinel, for two centuries!

How many and changing scenes have you looked upon! Time was when the dusky sons of America, the true owners of the soil, hunted and fished along this beautiful river and rested beneath thy shade.

Much abused and ill-treated race ! What did you gain by the coming of the pale face ? What did he do to christianize you ? What did he tell you more than the Great Spirit taught you, of whom the mighty forest trees preached, and the big rivers sang hymns in His praise, the broad lakes mirroring His beauty.

O contemptible white race ! that robbed the Indian of his birthright !

And thou, old Locust Tree, looked and saw his wigwam pushed on towards the setting sun, and the places that knew him know him no more.

Thou hast lived, like the Muser to lament over the loss of the flowing river, the broad green hills, the grand old forest trees.

Farewell to the green Grass ! You with your little fingers will be near this poor body ~~when~~ it rests in its last sleeping place. But I will not say farewell — for you will be near me to the end !

CHAPTER XXVI.

A REVERIE.



Summer day ; a blue sky overhead ; the mown grass sending up its delicious perfume ; it was a day dream , but — how real.

The Muser in the Old-fashioned Garden. The mother bending over her plants, the elder sister beside her. The brothers examining their trees.

The mother talking of things present and things to come, leading the thoughts of her children, from Nature's works to Nature's God.

All were together in outward presence and inward union, one heart and one mind, as they always had been — the home unbroken !

Birds sang in the locust trees, the river flowed on with its gentle ripple, the sunshine gilded the flowers, the hours glided on, in home peace and happiness.

* * * * *

The scene changed — the dear ones had vanished ! The Muser was alone !

The trees had lost their leaves. The flowers had faded. The beautiful river was gone and, in its place, a desolate, bare dumping-ground. The Garden looked old and neglected.

Sadness closed round the Muser like a mantle, and she felt a longing embodied in Whittier's lines,

" Then let us stretch our hands in darkness
And call our loved ones o'er and o'er —
Sometime their arms will fold about us,
And their loved voices speak once more !"

And a soft wind stealing round the lonely one whispered —

" Why cannot we remember that we live in eternity, and so — be patient !"

" For ours are the Immortal Years !"



